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ABSTRACT

The Qualitative Studies section of the proceedings contains the following 13 papers: "Writing as Theater: The Marketing of the Digital Word" (Sally McMillan); "Rethinking Ideology: Polysemy, Pleasure and Hegemony in Television Culture" (Luis Rivera-Perez); "Low Power FM: A Small History" (Gregory J. Adamo); "The Residue of Culture: An Ellulian Dialogic Analysis of Religious Imagery in a Network Television Drama" (Rick Clifton Moore); "News Values, News Strategies: "The New York Times" in Haiti, 1994-96" (Jack Lule); "Walt Disney, 1941-1966: Mass Media Products in Service of the American Way" (Joel L. Cliff); "Introducing Television to the American Home: A Dialectic of Structure and Practice in History" (Olaf Hoerschelmann); "Constructing the Nuclear-Waste Discourse: An Analysis of Coverage in Four Minnesota Newspapers of the Prairie Island Controversy" (Patricia Jane Berg); "Public Mind, Private Eye: Critical Orality-Literacy and TV Criticism" (Ralph Beliveau); "Feeding the Dinosaurs: Economic Concentration in the Retail Book Industry" (Jon Bekken); "Ryszard Kapuscinski: Epistemic Responsibility, Narrative Theory, and Literary Journalism" (James L. Aucoin); "Frames of Blame: A Textual Semiosis of "Newstrack's" Representation of Aids in India" (Nilanjana Bardhan); and "A War By Any Other Name: A Textual Analysis of Falklands/Malvinas War Coverage in U.S. and Latin American Newspapers" (Carolina Acosta-Alzuru and Elizabeth Pauline Lester). Individual papers contain references. (CR)

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Qualitative Studies Division.

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Writing as Theater: The Marketing of the Digital Word

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Prepared for the Qualitative Studies Division

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Abstract:

The computer represents the latest evolutionary stage in the processing of words. This study examines the "imperfect mirror" of advertising to learn how marketing messages are shaping the way that we understand this new means of communication. The producers of word processing products play a central role in the drama of the digital word, but the primary protagonists are technology and humanity. Most advertisements cast technology as the hero and humanity as the rescued victim.

Introduction

> We stand at the brink of a new age, a new time, when the handling of the written word will change very deeply, and civilization will change accordingly.[1]

Words are the building blocks of language. From hieroglyphics pressed into clay, to the development of parchment scrolls, to Gutenberg's manipulation of moveable type, words have been processed into visible forms. The computer represents the latest evolutionary stage in the processing of words. As Nelson suggests in the opening quote, this new way of building language may have lasting impacts on civilization. Yet, computer-processed words are one of the least tangible forms of writing. Jay David Bolter notes that "Words in the computer are ultimately embodied in the collective behavior of electrons, which fly around in the machine at unimaginable speeds."[2]

IBM coined the term "word processing" in 1964 to describe a typing machine that used magnetic tape to store pages of text. With the introduction of personal computers in the late 1970s, the concept of word processing expanded. The capabilities for on-screen editing, cutting, pasting, and endless revisions have been defined, refined, and packaged. Michael Heim suggests that word processing has become a cultural phenomenon.[3]

Brenda Laurel compares the cultural phenomenon of computing with the cultural experience of theater. She claims that computers "have the potential to transform the process of writing from a series of isolated and cumbersome tasks into a whole action that retains and refreshes its connections to its inspiration, materials, and outcome."[4] But, to achieve this potential, developers must recognize the inherent drama of human computer interaction.

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[1] Theodor Holm Nelson, *Literary Machines 90.1*, (Sausalito, CA: Mindful Press, 1990): 0/11.

[2] Jay David Bolter, *Writing Space*, (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1991): 5-6.

[3] Michael Heim, *Electric Language: A Philosophical Study of Word Processing*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987): 5.

This paper explores the evolving drama of word processing as it is played out in the advertising messages of software developers. Roland Marchand used a similar approach in his attempt to understand American life in the early part of the twentieth century. He began an analysis of advertising from 1920 to 1940 with the premise that advertising would provide an "authentic and uncomplicated social mirror" of that time. Instead, he found that "advertising's mirror not only distorted, it also selected."[5] The research reported below recognizes that advertising is not a perfect mirror. Nevertheless, marketers' messages about word processing are a key element in the drama of the digital word.

Setting the Stage

Social science research on word processing has focused primarily on issues such as the impact of this type of software on creativity,[6] non-linear thinking,[7] and education.[8] Articles on the marketing of word processing software have remained primarily the domain of trade journals such as *Computerworld, InfoWorld,* and *PC Magazine*. A few articles related to the marketing of software in general have appeared in academic journals. For example, Petroski sampled advertisements for engineering software in 1990 and 1994 and found that the 1990 advertisements emphasize the reliability and ease of use of packages. However, the 1994 advertisements make fewer implied promises about the software doing the engineer's work.[9]

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[4] Brenda Laurel, *Computers as Theater*, (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wessley, 1993): 173.

[5] Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986): xv-xvii

[6] See for example, Gerald W. Bracey, "Word Processing and Creativity: A Mixed Bag," *Phi Delta Kappan*, 74 (October, 1992): 180-182.

[7] See for example, G. David Garson, "Computer Assistance of Social Science Writing," *The Social Science Journal*, 27 (July, 1989): 335-344.

[8] See for example, Renate I. Rohde, "Effect of Word Processing on Students' Grades and Evaluation of Instruction in Freshman Composition," *Psychological Reports*, 72 (June, 1993): 1259-1265.

Because of the relative paucity of academic literature on the marketing of word processing software, this paper takes a descriptive approach to analyzing the world according to word processing advertisers. To gain insight into how marketers framed their messages about word processing products, a sample was drawn of advertisements that appeared from 1982 through 1995 in *PC Magazine*.[10] November[11] issues were selected for analysis because both new products and new ad campaigns are often launched in November to coincide with COMDEX, the computer industry's major trade show. This study examines all ads in the sample that are at least 1/2 page in size and that focus primarily on word processing products. This sample yielded 61 ads for 29 different products.

Both graphic and textual elements of each advertisement were analyzed. Appendix 1 summarizes all of the headlines in the ads and Appendix 2 provides samples of some ads that are representative of primary themes that emerged in the analysis.

The Arena

Before considering content of the ads, it is helpful to examine briefly the context in terms such as total number of ads, ad pages, and ad size. The sample yielded 86.75 pages of advertising. Ads ranged from 1/2 page to 8 pages. The most common format was the 1 page ad (38 cases) followed by the 2 page ad (12 cases).

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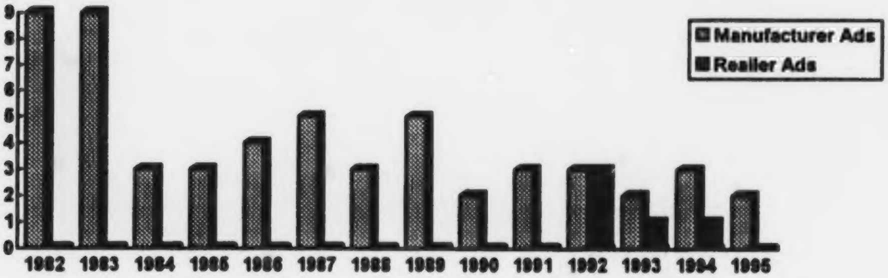
[9] Henry Petroski, "Failed promises," *American Scientist*, 82 (Jan-Feb, 1994): 6-10.

[10] Among computer magazines, *PC Magazine* has consistently had the highest advertising page count and was therefore the choice for analysis. *PC Magazine* began publication in 1982.

[11] In 1982 and 1983, *PC Magazine* produced one issue per month. From 1984 through 1995 the magazine produced two issues per month; in those years, the first November issue was selected for analysis.

An average of four ads appeared in each magazine of the 14-year sample. However, as Figure 1 illustrates, the actual number of advertisements varied from year to year.

Figure 1 - Number of Word Processing Ads Run Each November



No definitive pattern emerges from this data. However, two trends are worthy of note. First, the early years were most diverse. In both 1982 and 1983 a total of nine different products were advertised in each issue[12]. This suggests that barriers to entry were still relatively low and a relatively large number of players were able to compete for a part in the emerging drama of the digital word. Second, toward the end of the sample period, ads placed by retailers (e.g., catalog operations) increased. For example, the 1992 sample includes three separate one-page ads placed by a single retailer, Software Spectrum. The ads are for WordPerfect, Microsoft Word, and AmiPro. In the same magazine in which these three ads appear, both WordPerfect and Word are featured in manufacturer-produced advertising. Thus, these retailer ads do little to enhance the diversity of product offerings.

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[12] Both 1982 and 1983 were years in which *PC Magazine* created only one issue per month. However, this fact alone does not account for the higher ad count. There is also a greater diversity of ads in these early years as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1 reports when and how often different brands were advertised. This provides evidence of the lack of diversity of product offerings. Data reported in Table 1 suggests that WordPerfect and Microsoft Word have lasted longer and been advertised more extensively than competing products. WordStar was advertised heavily before the 1990 introduction of Windows 3.0, but advertising stopped almost concurrently with the Windows introduction.

Table 1 - Diversity of Brand Offerings by Rank Order of Total Ad Pages

Product Name	First Year Advertised	Last Year Advertised	Total Ad Pages[13]
WordPerfect	1983	1994	17.5
Microsoft Word	1986	1995	17
WordStar	1985	1989	8
Ami Pro	1991	1992	5
WordPlus-PC	1982	1984	5
Lotus Manuscript	1987	1989	4
XyWrite	1982	1990	4
PFS Professional Write	1986	1987	2
Professional Write 2.0	1988	1988	2
Q&A Write	1987	1988	2
Textra	1982	1983	2
Volkswriter	1982	1983	2
WordPerfect Works	1994	1994	2
CA-Textor	1992	1992	1
DeScribe	1991	1991	1
DisplayWrite	1989	1989	1
Edix + Wordix	1982	1982	1
EinsteinWriter	1985	1985	1

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[13] Total ad pages is not equivalent to total ads run. Multiple page ads will increase the ad page count. This table reports all pages in multiple-page ads because this measure is more sensitive to expenditure and potential customer exposure than a simple count of advertisements placed.

Table 1 – Diversity of Brand Offerings by Rank Order of Total Ad Pages, Continued

Product Name	First Year Advertised	Last Year Advertised	Total Ad Pages
Legacy	1991	1991	1
Multimate Word Processor	1983	1983	1
OfficeWriter	1984	1984	1
Palantir Word Processing	1983	1983	1
Perfect Writer	1982	1982	1
Pie:Writer	1983	1983	1
PowerText	1982	1982	1
EasyWriter	1982	1982	.75
Good-Words	1983	1983	.5
The Benchmark	1982	1982	.5
Universal Word	1995	1995	.5

The Stage

The history traced in Table 1 suggests that WordStar and other products failed to make the transition between two generations of operating systems: DOS and Windows. Operating systems are an important element of the stage on which the word processing drama is played.

From 1982 through 1984, operating system requirements are frequently included in the advertising text. DOS dominates these ads, and a minimum level of DOS (e.g., DOS 2.0) is often specified. Additionally, these ads often distinguish between PC-DOS (IBM's custom operating system) and MS-DOS (the Microsoft operating system which was virtually identical to PC-DOS but which ran on "clones"). One ad appearing in 1982 indicates that the company, Perfect Software, offered both DOS and CP/M (an earlier operating system) versions of their products. By 1983, all references to CP/M had been dropped. And between 1985 and 1990, the majority of the ads made no reference at all to operating system. Readers of ads in the sampled publication might presume that all word processing products were DOS-based.

But in 1990, when Windows 3.0 emerged as a powerful new operating system, ads began to specify that products were Windows compatible. AmiPro formed a message around the concept that it was "the only word processor designed from the ground up for Windows."

Data reported in Figure 1 show that 1989, the last year of DOS dominance, was the last year in which five or more different products were advertised in a single magazine issue. Thus, it would seem that the more powerful but more complex capabilities of Windows served as a barrier to entry for some software developers. Preliminary analysis of the impact of Windows 95 supports the view that sophisticated operating systems create a barrier to entry. The 1995 sample includes only two word processing products – the lowest total number of ads in any one issue. One ad is for Microsoft Word (created by the developer of Windows 95) and the other ad is for a technical and specialized product which is labeled "The Giant Killer."

The Players

The advertisers who are responsible for creating both products and advertisements are central to the drama of word processing marketing. Analysis of 1995 ads suggests that Microsoft seems to be the reigning giant; but throughout the sampled period several products have claimed leadership status while others have assumed the role of giant killer.

The 1982 ad for PowerText establishes the pattern of leader and underdog relationships. The headline reads "Is WordStar as Good as PowerText?" The ad sets WordStar up as the acknowledged industry leader and then knocks it down with a series of claims summarized in the subhead which reads: "Quite simply, PowerText will do far more for you than WordStar." In 1985 WordStar reinforces its role as the reigning giant in an ad with the headline: "You Don't Need a Computer to Figure out Which is the Best Word Processor."

By 1988, the balance of power was shifting and WordPerfect proclaimed that it had "produced the number-one selling word processor for two years running." WordPerfect continued to position itself as the leader through 1980s. But, with the 1990 introduction of Windows, leadership in word processing software seemed to shift. AmiPro made a strong case for its leadership as a "Windows-designed" product. But, by the mid 1990s Microsoft Word seems to be the giant that all other products pit themselves against.

This shifting role of industry leader is often played out in the trade press. For example, a 1993 *PC Magazine* article reports user satisfaction is highest for windows-based products such as AmiPro and Word for Windows. But it also notes that the large installed base of WordStar users still clings to the product which once enjoyed industry dominance.[14]

The role of the underdog takes many forms in the sampled ads. A common theme is the "easy to use" message exhibited by Xyquest in 1983 (Appendix 2, Figure 1). The ad suggests that other word processors "distract you with a crazy command system," unlike XyWrite which is logical and easy to learn. The 1995 ad for the Universal Word lists an incredible array of features (such as support for over 100 languages including Croatian) then screams in bold face type: "All of this starting at the outrageous price of $49."

Behind the scenes, another story of underdogs and giants is played out in these ads. The big companies keep getting bigger by acquisition. For example, AmiPro is advertised for the first time in the sample (1991) as a Lotus product. But the fine print acknowledge the product's earlier roots by assigning the copyright to former owner Samna Corporation.[15]

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[14] Peggy Watt, "Word Processors," *PC Magazine*, 12 (July, 1993): 315-317.

[15] For a report on the Lotus purchase of AmiPro, see Louise Fickel, "Lotus breathes new life into AmiPro," *InfoWorld*, 14 (Feb. 3, 1992): 21.

One of the biggest mergers in recent software history is played out between the lines of WordPerfect advertising. In 1983, the product is advertised by Satellite Software International. In 1986, the company recognizes that it is best known as the maker of WordPerfect and changes the corporate name to WordPerfect Corporation. In 1994, Novell acquired WordPerfect and made the product the cornerstone of its applications group. The 1994 ad seems designed to calm customer fears about this merger. A full page is devoted to a testimonial about how Novell continues to uphold the reputation for service that WordPerfect developed. The ad proclaims that "now as part of Novell, WordPerfect offers even more options to find the solutions you need. You still get the same personalized service you've come to expect in the past, but now you can access the combined resources of Novell and WordPerfect." This service statement contradicts the commonly-accepted belief that Novell was not willing to invest the resources required to maintain the level of customer support that WordPerfect customers had come to expect in the past.[16] After the close of the sample period WordPerfect was sold again. Corel, a Candian company best known for its drawing program, purchased the product along with several other Novell business applications for a reported $186 million which industry analysts indicate is a "great deal" for the purchaser, but might signal further disaster for the more than 20 million people who still use WordPerfect.[17]

Finally, a discussion of the players would be incomplete without a program note about the role of retailers. Early ads stress the role of the retailer as a source of information and product demonstrations. Virtually all these ads stress that buyers should seek out a local retailer. This orientation is based on a marketing system in which obtaining shelf space was critical. Manufacturers sacrificed up to 50 percent of the selling price of a product in order to obtain widespread distribution through the wholesale/retail channel. But to get dealers to continue stocking products, manufacturers had to agree not to sell directly to customers. In the early to mid-1980s a typical pattern was for a developer to advertise a product nationally, attract a sizable customer base, and then seek distribution through the wholesale/retail channel.[18] A 1982 ad for Perfect Writer illustrates this model. At the bottom of the page are three pieces of information: an 800 to call for "the dealer nearest you," bold type proclaiming "dealer inquiries invited," and finally, boxed copy which announces that Microhouse (a wholesaler) has just become a major dealer/distributor of Perfect Software products.

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[16] For a discussion of WordPerfect's historic role as a provider of outstanding technical support see Paul Merenbloom, "With WordPerfect Up for Sale, Where will IS Go for Support?" *InfoWorld*, 17 (Dec. 4, 1995): 52.

[17] Jake Kirchner, "Novell to WordPerfect Users: Drop Dead!" *PC Magazine*, 15 (March 26, 1996): 37.

But by the early 1990s, the roles showed signs of change. Manufactures no longer instructed customers to "call for the dealer nearest you." Instead, the ads invited readers to call an 800 number and place an order. Retailers, particularly mail order companies, began to take a larger role in primary product advertising.[19] This advertising may have been subsidized by manufacturer co-op funds, but each ad featured products from a single manufacturer. Examples include: 1992 ads by Software Spectrum for WordPerfect, Microsoft Word, and AmiPro; a 1993 ad by Dustin Discount Software for Word Perfect; and a 1994 ad by Corporate Software for Microsoft Office.

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[18] For a discussion of early developments in the method of word processing software retailing, see V. Dudek, "Controlling the Price of Success," *PC Magazine*, 4 (April 16, 1985: 33-34.

[19] For a discussion of changing trends in software retailing, see Lincoln Spector, "Buying from the Bins," *PC World*, 12 (Feb, 1994): 186.

The Story

The stage is set and the cast of characters is identified but, as Hamlet noted, "the play's the thing." And for the drama of word processing marketing, the advertisement's the thing. In keeping with modern advertising practice, almost all of these ads contain three primary elements: a headline, a primary visual element, and body copy. Appendix 1 summarizes headlines for each of the sampled ads.

Central graphic elements are a bit more difficult to present in summary form; however, a few generalizations can be made. The product packaging, depiction of the product operating on a computer screen, and/or samples of product output are the most common graphical elements found in ads. Most often, these product elements are shown through the use of photographs. However, not all ads depend on photography; original art appears in ads such as the 1988 ad for Professional Write which presents an elaborate collage of a manager's desk including a half eaten sandwich, phone messages, a watch, a glass with a soft drink still bubbling, and a copy of the Professional Write product package.

Several ads use cartoon techniques. A notable example is the 1994 ad for WordPerfect Works which depicts three men and one woman in a cluttered office. All are caricatures with large noses and rumpled clothing. Two of the men are tentatively tapping at computers. The woman holds a pencil to chin while watching one of these men. The third man is fumbling with blue prints. The time on the office clock is 1:00. The text of the ad leads us to believe that people like these can improve their productivity with everyday software that matches the everyday needs of people who work on "Main Street."

The interplay of text and graphics forms the basis of the following analysis of primary themes in these ads. The six subject areas explored here are not all-inclusive, but they do represent major story lines that punctuate the drama of word processing advertising.

Peopie

Of the 61 ads, 57 percent do not have any human graphically represented. In 23 percent of the ads, the only humans depicted are male. Five percent show only women, and 7 percent show mixed-gender groups. Additionally, 7 percent show a body part (hands or head) that cannot be definitely identified by gender.

In fact, almost all of the ads that show people do not show the whole body but focus instead on the head or the hands. This focus on head and hands may be partially explained by design practices that stress tight cropping. But a brief look at a few examples suggests some deeper meaning may be involved in this focus on the "thinking" and "doing" parts of the body.

One prime example of the disembodied head is the 1995 ad for Microsoft Word. The central graphic element is a photograph of a black male. His head is shown in profile. Superimposed in the middle of his head is a "start" key bearing the Windows logo. Extending from this key are lines which connect to a picture of the product packaging, and other symbols of product functionality. The headline is, "to write as fast as you can think."

This connection between thinking, writing, and speed is also central to several of the ads which utilize disembodied hands. WordPerfect's 1984 ad pictures a woman's hands hovering over a keyboard. Copy appears in large type on the screen: "Speed Limit 55 WPM." The headline asks, "Can your Word Processor Keep Up With Your 100 WPM Typist?" WordStar's 1989 ad also pictures a female hand hovering over the keyboard. The headline admonishes the reader to "Keep your hands where they belong." The copy suggests that WordStar's command key system is more efficient than the use of function keys. The sexual double-entendre in the WordStar ad is particularly interesting in light of the fact that these are two of only three ads in which woman are depicted without men also being in the picture.

Other instances of disembodied hands seem to suggest the power of hands to drive the functionality of the software - almost as if the software enables action without thought. One of the most exotic examples is the 1991 ad for DeScribe (Appendix 2, Figure 2). A gloved hand rests on a mouse. The index finger hovers over the right mouse button. The mouse, hand, and mouse cord seem to have just raced onto the screen leaving icons, a ruler, and other screen elements flying in the wind. The headline uses three words: "Simplicity, Speed, Success."

The 1983 ad for Textra warrants a special mention because of its unusual focus on the human eye (Appendix 2, Figure 3). The dominant graphic is a 5 1/2" floppy disk with the words "Textra $95" in reverse type at the top. Looking through the hole in the center of the disk is an eye. No additional parts of the body are seen and no reference to the eye is made anywhere in the headline or body copy. On the one hand, this disembodied eye is reminiscent of the eye that floats above the pyramid on the back of a one dollar bill. On the other hand, the slightly veiled pupil is both seductive and threatening. The hint of a computer-mediated "big brother" seems to be present in the image.

The Analog

Some of the sample ads explain and/or illustrate product functionality by comparing the digital process of word processing to traditional analog writing tools. Pens and pencils appear as a central visual element in several of the ads. Chalk boards form a central graphic element in two of the ads, and books appear as a secondary graphic element in two other ads.

The pen or pencil seems to suggest simplicity. For example, the central graphic element of the 1992 ad for CA-Textor is a baby's head, with pencil tucked behind the ear. The product is depicted as the "first word processor that makes writing almost as easy as talking."

WordPerfect's 1994 ad utilizes the analogy of the blackboard to illustrate the headline: "Any word processor can write. Only WordPerfect can read." The ad focuses on the way that technology enables a new integration of reading and writing functions. The machine actually reads what you are writing and, like a good teacher who is watching students write on the board, suggests corrections as you write.

WordStar's 1987 ad also addresses the role of digitally processed words in enhancing and extending traditional analog communications. The ad features lists of writers and movie directors who have utilized WordStar to write articles, editorials, plays, screen plays, and books. The ad begins with a word picture of the shift from analog to digital writing:

> Only eight years ago, a few writers mothballed their typewriters, erasers, scissors and tape. Instead of facing blank sheets they saw their words on screens. And they moved sentences, paragraphs, even whole pages with simple keystrokes. They discovered WordStar word processing software for personal computers. Suddenly, whatever could be done, could be done better. And better again. Infinitely. In 1979, they were a small group of visionaries. Today there are over 3 million of them.

Historical Ties

In addition to appealing to early forms of writing, several ads also appealed to earlier styles of living. Lotus used this theme twice. In the first example (1989), Manuscript was one of a set of three products that were compared with the Three Musketeers. Compatibility between the products was characterized by the slogan, "All for one and one for all." In Lotus' 1991 ad for AmiPro, the graphic depicts four men and one woman. All are dressed in turn of the century hunting garb. Three of the men carry large rifles, and the group looks prepared for big-game hunting. The headline suggests that "No one ever bought a word processor because it was fun (until now)." The copy declares that "You can now create letter perfect, picture perfect, documents in half the time, with half the effort. And with twice the fun."

The 1983 ad for XyWrite (Appendix 2, Figure 1) also draws on historical images. A barbarian wields a sword over a tiny trembling man who is typing into a keyboard. We see the lead paragraph of the story that this presumed journalist is filing: "North of Katmandu -- Six hundred years after the rampages of Ghengis Khan, savage Mongolian tribesmen still roam freely in these wild and rugged mountains." The key message is that XyWrite is the word processor to use "when there's no time to waste."

Back to Nature

While many of the ads focus on technology, a few ads look to nature to symbolize the beauty of word processing. The image of a rose appears in ads for three separate products, EasyWriter, WordPlus-PC, and OfficeWriter. In all cases it is incongruously placed next to a computer, a disk, or product packaging. The copy makes no reference to the rose, but leaves the reader to draw conclusions about symbolic meanings. One possible explanation of the rose is that it was used in early IBM ads for the PC product in conjunction with the Charlie Chaplin image. It may have been used in these word processing ads to emphasizes the message that these are IBM-PC compatible products (as contrasted with earlier CP/M-based products).

The image of a tree is used by two companies. Volkswriter is made by a company named Lifetree software. The company logo is prominent in the ads and features a stylized tree surrounded by stylized lines which could be either a river or a paper clip. Good-Words software is made by a company named Oak Tree Computing. The ad for this product uses as its only graphic image a large oak. The words "made in the shade" appear near the tree.

WordPerfect utilizes an incongruous natural image in its packaging. The package is a central element in most WordPerfect ads. Starting in 1988 the package features a butterfly floating above a pen, pencil, glasses, paper clip, address labels, letter, and computer disks.

Evolution

The nature metaphor is extended in some advertising to the concept of natural selection and evolution. WordPerfect is most explicit in developing this theme. For example, the 1988 ad (which introduced the butterfly on the box) lines up earlier packaging and captions the display as "the evolution of WordPerfect." This evolutionary theme culminates in the 1990 ad (Appendix 2, Figure 4) which features a picture of Charles Darwin and the headline, "If WordPerfect 5.1 were there, all his theories could have descended from a mouse."

Microsoft's 1993 ad for Office also echoes this evolutionary theme. Microsoft declares that it has "gone right to the core of all our renowned programs for Windows and evolved them into a single, intelligent, effortless working environment."

Power

The subject of power imbues many of these ads. In some cases, power references are explicit. For example, the 1982 ad for Textra is built around three primary messages: Powerful, Full-Featured, and Friendly. This balance between power and ease of use is implicit in many of the sampled ads.

A bizarre example of appeal to power is the 1987 ad for Q&A Write (Appendix 2, Figure 5). The top half of the ad pictures Ronald Reagan, then president of the United States. He is holding a report (printed with Q&A Write). The headline appears next to his mouth as if it were his words: "Short of knocking down satellites, Q&A Write is the best way to use a laser." The ad raises questions about commercial appropriation of a public figure; but the image of the president and his "Star Wars" defense system unquestionably imply power.

The Denouement

Laurel suggests that "The Greeks employed drama and theater as *tools for thought*, in much the same way that we employ computers today – or at least in the ways that we envision employing them in the not-too-distant future."[20] I propose two tools for tying together thoughts about the story presented in this sample of word processing advertising. First, the producers play a central role and must be brought on stage for a final curtain call. Second, the primary protagonists are unveiled: technology and humanity.

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[20] Laurel, 40.

Producers

This research analyzed advertisements rather than advertisers, but some inferences can be drawn about the producers of ads based on the advertising products. First, one can trace evolution of advertiser sophistication in both the visual and textual elements of the ads. A recent *New York Times* article indicates that the "advertising efforts of high-tech marketers have grown more sophisticated since the days when their idea of effective selling was to attend trade shows and give away pocket protectors."[21]

Early ads are likely to lack visual focus. For example, of the nine advertisements run in 1982 four of the message contained no graphic elements and were structured like a specification sheet that listed product features. Later ads tend to have more visual interest both in terms of reduced clutter and a greater consistency between graphic and textual elements.

The text of many early ads is lengthy and unfocused. Product features, company background, user testimonials, dealer information, and technical specifications are run together with little or no transition. Later ads are more likely to tell stories in the text. These stories may be user focused as is the 1994 ad for Microsoft Office that traces how the brand manager for the cable channel Nickelodeon relies on Microsoft Office to "help him put it all together." Other ads in later stages of evolution focus on a single set of benefits or themes. For example, WordPerfect's 1993 ad builds the copy around the theme "It's as individual as you are."

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[21] Stuart Elliott, "Silicon Valley executives don't seem to feel they are getting much bang for their marketing buck," *New York Times*, 27 November 1995, p. 9 (D).

This evolution of advertising sophistication may represent a transition in the use of advertising agencies. Early advertisers as well as more recent entrants who are operating on low budgets may have used low-cost advertising suppliers. Two ways of reducing cost for ad production are to hire small, local agencies which often specialize in retailing or to create the advertisement in-house. In both of these low-cost models, the level of art direction and copy writing is likely to be inferior to that found in advertising produced by agencies that employ highly-paid creative teams, researchers, and account managers.[22]

Another possible explanation of the evolution of advertising design may be explained by the advertisers' perceptions of the market for their products. Earlier and smaller firms may have been aiming at a niche market of well-trained users and thus would not have felt the need to tell a basic story about what word processing can do.

However, even the more recent ads run by major software manufacturers differ significantly from typical consumer products advertising. This difference in advertising may be because even highly-paid advertising agencies have determined that the readers of these computer magazines are different from the consumers of other kinds of packaged goods. However, Carroll suggests that computer advertising is still very much industry-centered rather than customer-centered. He argues that computer advertisements all look the same: flashy and boastful. They are often filled with computer jargon that can confuse expert buyers; but when they do try the creative approach the results are rarely informative and often dismal.[23]

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[22] For a discussion of the challenge that advertising agencies faced in breaking into computer-based advertising, see Jennifer Pendelton and Cleveland Horton, "Agencies' Hopes Rising in Silicon Valley," *Advertising Age*, 57 (Jan 6, 1986): 6.

[23] John R. Carroll, "Flashy Ad, but What's It Trying to Say?" *Computerworld*, 26, (Sept 28, 1992): 103.

A recent survey found that 90 percent of the chief executive officers of technology companies said they were moderately or extensively involved in marketing campaigns. "There has always been a feeling of elitism among technology companies that mainstream marketers don't really understand their business and aren't qualified to provide strategic counsel and advice."[24] Yet, most of these CEOs have little background in marketing: 80 percent said their backgrounds were technological.

Two of the most notable differences between these word processing ads and consumer ads is the absence of long-term thematic campaigns and the ongoing focus on features rather than benefits. These ads have no equivalent to the Energizer bunny. The closest that any of the sampled ads get to the concept of an ongoing campaign is the repeated reference to "evolution" in WordPerfect's advertising.

Consumer products advertising is awash with examples of benefit advertising - frequently based on the problem/solution format. But word processing ads do not seem to present "ring around the collar" kinds of problems that are open to easy solutions. Instead, these ads provide a list of technical features and imply benefits such as improved work performance. Even the 1995 ad for Microsoft Word (one of the latest ads in the sample produced for the software developer with the deepest pockets) lacks a strong benefit orientation. A key copy block in that ad begins "New Microsoft Word is designed to work hand-in-hand with the 32-bit performance, advanced multitasking, and simplified user interface of the Windows 95 operating system." This feature-focused bias provides the frame in which the two primary protagonists, technology and humanity, play out the story of these ads.

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[24] Elliott, 9

Technology and Humanity

Each of the six themes which emerged in analysis of word processing advertisements addresses the tension between technology and humanity. More than half of the ads show no people at all; however, some representation of the technology product is visible in almost every ad (not an easy task given the intangibility of software). And when people are pictured, they are often not whole beings. The disembodied heads and hands emphasizes those body parts that most directly connect to the computer technology.

Advertisements featuring pens, pencils, chalkboards, books, and other older writing tools provide a link between the familiar and the foreign. These analog communication tools play the mediator role - introducing the protagonist (technology) to the victim (humanity).

When the advertising stories identify an antagonist, the villain is often some other technology (e.g., another word processing product, another kind of computer). Thus technology takes the active and empowered roles casting the human as the "damsel in distress" who is dependent on technology to rescue her from a life of ineffective communication. This casting of technology as the hero is also evident in the historical references. Lotus equates its products with the Three Musketeers. WordPerfect positions its product as a tool that could have further enlightened the great mind of Charles Darwin. And XyWrite is a product which can save one from savage Mongolian tribesmen.

The "back to nature" allusions in some of the advertisements suggest that there might be a slightly sinister side to technology. But, by associating their products with benevolent natural images (such as roses, trees, and butterflies) the advertisers seek to mask the hard edge of technology. Similarly, evolutionary metaphors may seek to place technology in a natural context and position word processors as the most fit communication tool that promises to survive into the future. Bolter suggests the role of the human in this evolutionary process:

> As the most technologically sophisticated form of writing, electronic writing should be the farthest removed from human nature. The structure of electronic text is the most elaborate in the history of writing, and yet the capacity rapidly to create and modify structures makes the computer in some sense the most natural of writing systems.[25]

The tension between technology and humanity is most clearly played out in the power metaphors. Technology is the hero that meets humanity's demands for greater ease of use. Advertisements may at times seem to highlight the human side of this relationship. For example, WordPerfect's 1993 ad proclaims "Of all the things people do with personal computers, word processing may be the most personal." But technology always wins the starring role. The same WordPerfect ad that opens by acknowledging the role of the person closes by transferring power to the technology: "the power of WordPerfect 6.0 is all yours."

The powerful dominance of technology portrayed in these ads echoes the technological optimism of Arthur C. Clarke:

> Can the synthesis of Man and Machine ever be stable, or will the purely organic component become such a hindrance that it has to be discarded? If this eventually happens - and I have . . . good reasons for thinking that it must - we have nothing to regret and certainly nothing to fear.[26]

Clarke's lack of regret or fear is not universal. C.P. Snow noted almost 40 years ago that humanity is divided into two cultures: "Literary intellectuals at one pole - at the other scientists. . . . Between the two a gulf of mutual incomprehension."[27] Word processing may help to bridge that gulf. Nelson offers the optimistic view that new systems for creating and sharing texts may facilitate the long-term goals of civilization: "education, understanding, human happiness, the preservation of humane traditions - but we must use today's and tomorrow's technologies" to achieve those goals.[28] Heim shares this optimistic view that technology and humanity can find common ground in the processing of language:

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[25] Bolter, 217

[26] Arthur C. Clarke, *Profile of the Future: An Inquiry into the Limits of the Possible*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1984), 243.

[27] Sir Charles Percy Snow, *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1959).

> If language is a system which we do not privately and individually create and manipulate for our own immediate ends, then might not the instruments by which thought is put into language, and is then composed, entered, stored, and exchanged, be in some sense essential to an understanding of ourselves?[29]

Word processing advertising offers a glimmer of hope. While these ads continue to cast technology as the hero and humanity as the rescued victim, there is evidence that the "imperfect mirror" of advertising has begun to recognize the individual as a key player in the drama of the digital word. Recent ads are more likely to show people than were earlier advertising messages. And recent ads are also more likely frame their message in terms of benefits rather than simply lists of features. But this new emphasis on people and benefits may have less to do with the "humanizing" of technology and more to do with the increasing sophistication of the marketers who are scripting the drama of the digital word.

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[28] Nelson, 1/13.

[29] Heim, 34

Appendix 1 – Summary of Headlines

Year	Headline	Product	Company
1982	How to move a paragraph	EasyWriter	IBM
1982	Edix + Wordix isn't the most popular, most easily learned, or least expensive word processor. It's only the best.	Edix + Wordix	Emerging Technology
1982	This is what the pros have said about Perfect Writer:	Perfect Writer	Perfect Software
1982	Is WordStar as Good as PowerText?	PowerText	Beaman Porter, Inc.
1982	At work or at home ... Textra is the fastest, easiest way to enter text into your PC	Textra	Ann Arbor Software Associates
1982	The Benchmark Word Processor	The Benchmark	Metasoft Corporation
1982	Volkswriter: How to get more from your IBM Personal Computer	Volkswriter	Lifetree Software
1982	Try our Word Processing Software for 30 Days. If You Don't Agree It's the Best, We'll Eat It.	WordPlus PC	Professional Software, Inc.
1982	XyWrite is text editing and now text editing is only $50	XyWrite	Xyquest
1983	The Full-Featured Word Processor	Good-Words	Oak Tree Computing, Inc.
1983	The Word Processor You've Been Dreaming Of	Multimate Word Processor	Softword Systems
1983	Palantir Word Processing: We Don't Have to Beef Up Our Guarantee With a Lot of Bull	Palantir Word Processing	Palantir Software
1983	Only the World's Best Word Processor Could Generate Words Like These	Pie:Writer	Hayden Software
1983	Leading the new generation in word processing...	Textra	Ann Arbor Software
1983	The Most Popular Word Processor for the IBM Personal Computer	Volkswriter Deluxe	Lifetree Software
1983	Word Perfect	WordPerfect	Satellite Software International
1983	Announcing the End of Word Processor Confusion	WordPlus-PC	Professional Software

Appendix 1 – Continued

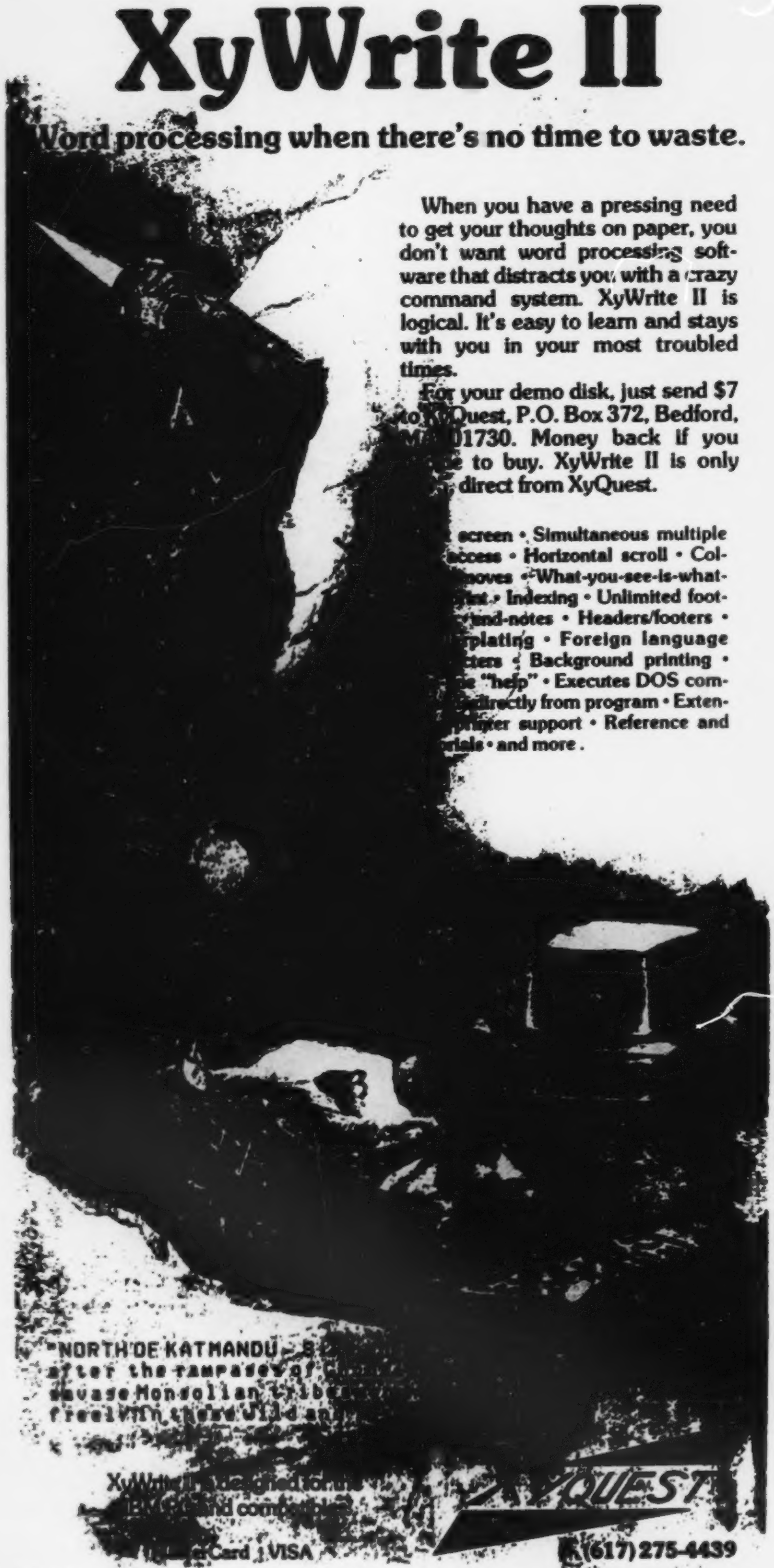
Year	Headline	Product	Company
1983	XyWrite II -- Word processing when there's no time to waste	XyWrite II	XyQuest
1984	Painless choice	OfficeWriter	Office Solutions, Inc.
1984	An Industry First in Word Processing Software	WordPlus-PC	Professional Software, Inc.
1984	Can your Word Processor Keep Up With Your 100 WPM Typist? It can if you have WordPerfect	WordPerfect	Satellite Software International
1985	Word Processing Software for the Complete Idiot	EinsteinWriter	United Software Industries
1985	How Does WordPerfect Top 4.0? Extra Credit	WordPerfect 4.1	SSI Software
1985	You Don't Need a Computer to Figure out Which is the Best Word Processor	Wordstar 2000	MicroPro
1986	Microsoft Word 3. It Outlines Its Own Advantages	Microsoft Word 3	Microsoft
1986	Dear Jim, For once I'm fast, not furious	PFS Professional Write	Software Publishing Corporation
1986	Business Partners	WordPerfect	WordPerfect Corporation
1986	A command performance	XyWrite III	XyQuest
1987	Today it's almost impossible to communicate fully without text and graphics on the same page.	Lotus Manuscript	Lotus Development Corporation
1987	For people too busy to learn word processing. And too busy not to.	PFS: Professional Write	Software Publishing Corporation
1987	Short of knocking down satellites, Q&A Write is the best way to use a laser	Q&A Write	Symantec
1987	Word stars on WordStar	WordStar	MicroPro International
1987	XyWrite III Plus: For People who Write	XyWrite III Plus	XyQuest
1988	Today's managers are expected to learn word processing in their spare time. Fortunately, that's all it takes.	Professional Write 2.0	Software Publishing Corporation

Appendix 1 – Continued

Year	Headline	Product	Company
1988	Easy-to-use Word Processor Check list.	Q&A Write	Symantec
1988	Practice makes WordPerfect	WordPerfect	WordPerfect Corporation
1989	Today's DisplayWrite. Word processing works for you on many different levels.	DisplayWrite	IBM
1989	If they came back as software, they'd be Lotus 1-2-3, Freelance, and Manuscript	Manuscript	Lotus Development Corporation
1989	If you want better word processing, don't settle for Perfect	Word	Microsoft
1989	Provide for the Future	WordPerfect	Word Perfect Corporation
1989	Keep your hands where they belong	WordStar 5.5	WordStar
1990	If WordPerfect 5.1 were there, all his theories could have descended from a mouse.	WordPerfect	WordPerfect Corporation
1990	XyWrite speaks ASCII	XyWrite	XyQuest
1991	No one ever bought a word processor because it was fun (until now).	AmiPro 2.0	Lotus Development corporation
1991	Simplicity, Speed, Success	DeScribe	MCI Mail
1991	Desktop Processor? Word Publisher?	Legacy	Not named
1992	Amiable Offers	AmiPro	Software Spectrum
1992	Their Word. Against Ours.	AmiPro 3.0	Lotus Development Corp.
1992	The Word is Out. Introducing New CA-Textor. The Friendliest Easiest Word Processor you'll ever meet.	CA-Textor	Computer Associates
1992	Microsoft Office Does it Right	Microsoft Office	Software Spectrum
1992	The Perfect Family	WordPerfect	Software Spectrum
1992	Windows Trade-Up	WordPerfect	WordPerfect Corporation
1993	In 1990, Microsoft Introduced Windows 3.0 and PCs have never been the same. Now History Repeats Itself.	Microsoft Office	Microsoft

Appendix 1 – Continued

Year	Headline	Product	Company
1993	It's as Individual as you are	WordPerfect 6.0	WordPerfect Corporation
1993	Perfect Upgrade	WordPerfect 6.0	Dustin Discount Software
1994	With Microsoft Office, Nickelodeon has Become the Biggest Kid on the Block	Microsoft Office	Microsoft
1994	Office Party	Microsoft Office	Corporate Software
1994	Any Word processor can write. Only WordPerfect can read.	WordPerfect	Novell
1994	Here are 3 Constructive Ways to Improve your productivity	WordPerfect Works	Novell
1995	To Write as Fast as you Can Think	Word	Microsoft
1995	The Giant Killer	Universal Word	WYSIWYG Corporation



XyWrite II

Word processing when there's no time to waste.

When you have a pressing need to get your thoughts on paper, you don't want word processing software that distracts you with a crazy command system. XyWrite II is logical. It's easy to learn and stays with you in your most troubled times.

For your demo disk, just send $7 to XyQuest, P.O. Box 372, Bedford, MA 01730. Money back if you [illegible] to buy. XyWrite II is only [illegible] direct from XyQuest.

[illegible] screen • Simultaneous multiple [illegible]access • Horizontal scroll • Col[illegible]moves • "What-you-see-is-what-[illegible] • Indexing • Unlimited foot-[illegible] end-notes • Headers/footers • [illegible]plating • Foreign language [illegible]cters • Background printing • [illegible] "help" • Executes DOS com[illegible] directly from program • Exten[illegible] printer support • Reference and [illegible]rials • and more.

XyWrite II is designed for the IBM PC and compatibles.

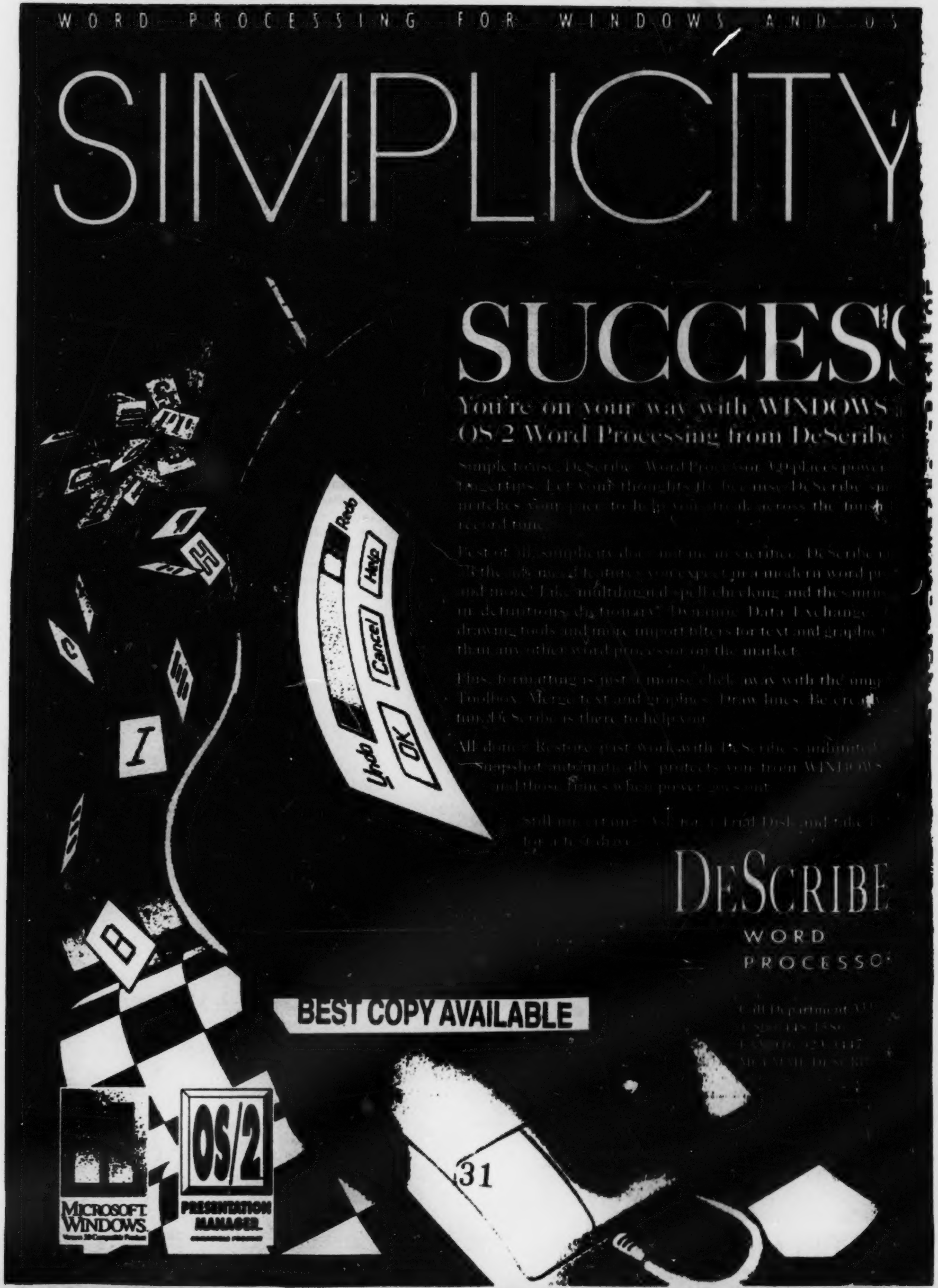
[illegible]Card / VISA

XYQUEST

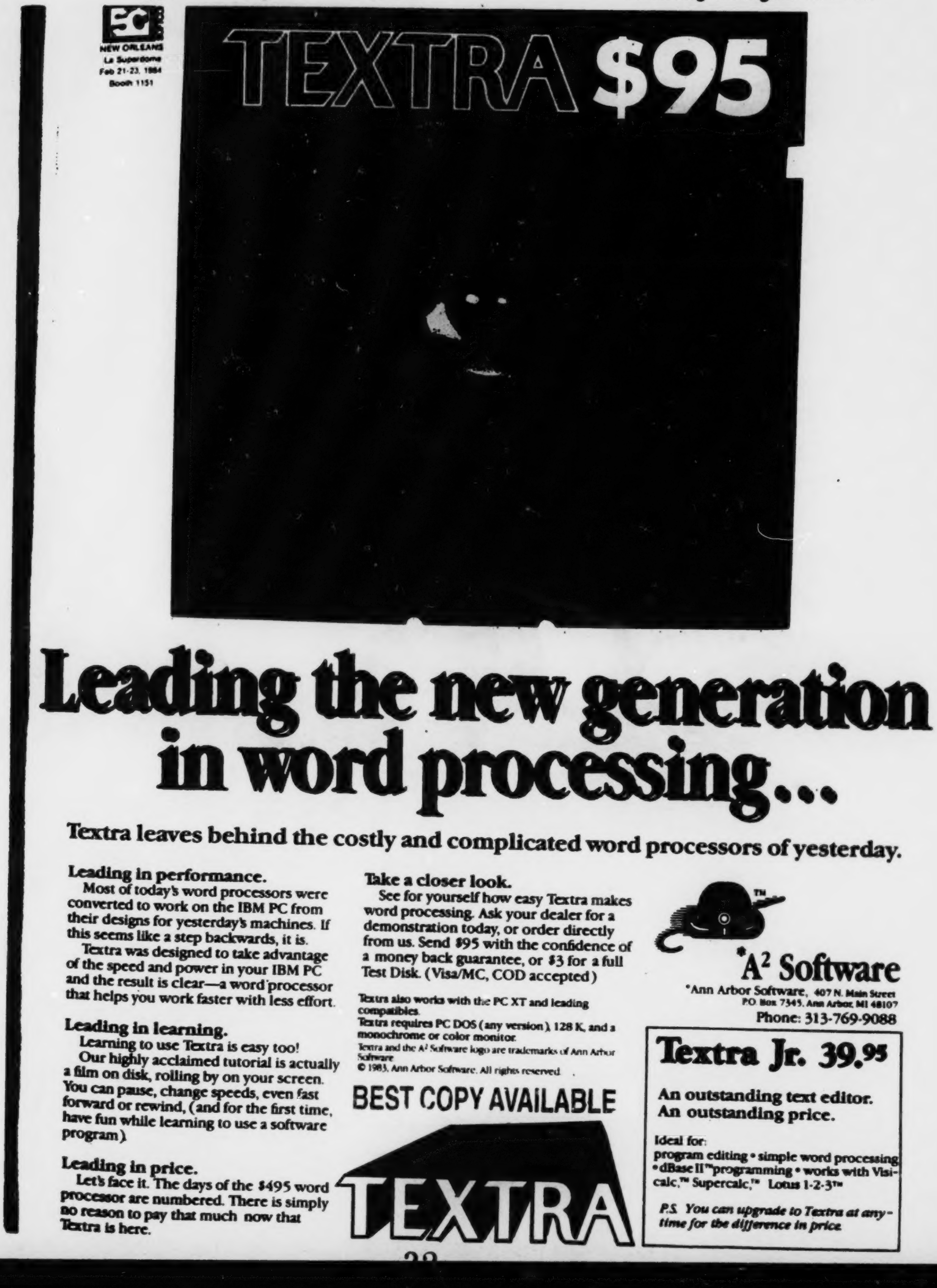
(617) 275-4439

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix 2: Figure 2 -- DeScribe 1991


WORD PROCESSING FOR WINDOWS AND OS
SIMPLICITY
SUCCESS
You're on your way with WINDOWS
OS/2 Word Processing from DeScribe
Redo
Help
Cancel
Undo
OK
I
B
DESCRIBE
WORD
PROCESSO
MICROSOFT WINDOWS
OS/2
PRESENTATION MANAGER
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix 2: Figure 3 -- Textra 1983



NEW ORLEANS
La Superdome
Feb 21-23, 1984
Booth 1151
TEXTRA $95
TM

Leading the new generation in word processing...

Textra leaves behind the costly and complicated word processors of yesterday.

Leading in performance.

Most of today's word processors were converted to work on the IBM PC from their designs for yesterday's machines. If this seems like a step backwards, it is.

Textra was designed to take advantage of the speed and power in your IBM PC and the result is clear—a word processor that helps you work faster with less effort.

Leading in learning.

Learning to use Textra is easy too!

Our highly acclaimed tutorial is actually a film on disk, rolling by on your screen. You can pause, change speeds, even fast forward or rewind, (and for the first time, have fun while learning to use a software program).

Leading in price.

Let's face it. The days of the $495 word processor are numbered. There is simply no reason to pay that much now that Textra is here.

Take a closer look.

See for yourself how easy Textra makes word processing. Ask your dealer for a demonstration today, or order directly from us. Send $95 with the confidence of a money back guarantee, or $3 for a full Test Disk. (Visa/MC, COD accepted)

Textra also works with the PC XT and leading compatibles.
Textra requires PC DOS (any version), 128 K, and a monochrome or color monitor.
Textra and the A² Software logo are trademarks of Ann Arbor Software

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TEXTRA

***A² Software**

*Ann Arbor Software, 407 N. Main Street
P.O. Box 7345, Ann Arbor, MI 48107
Phone: 313-769-9088

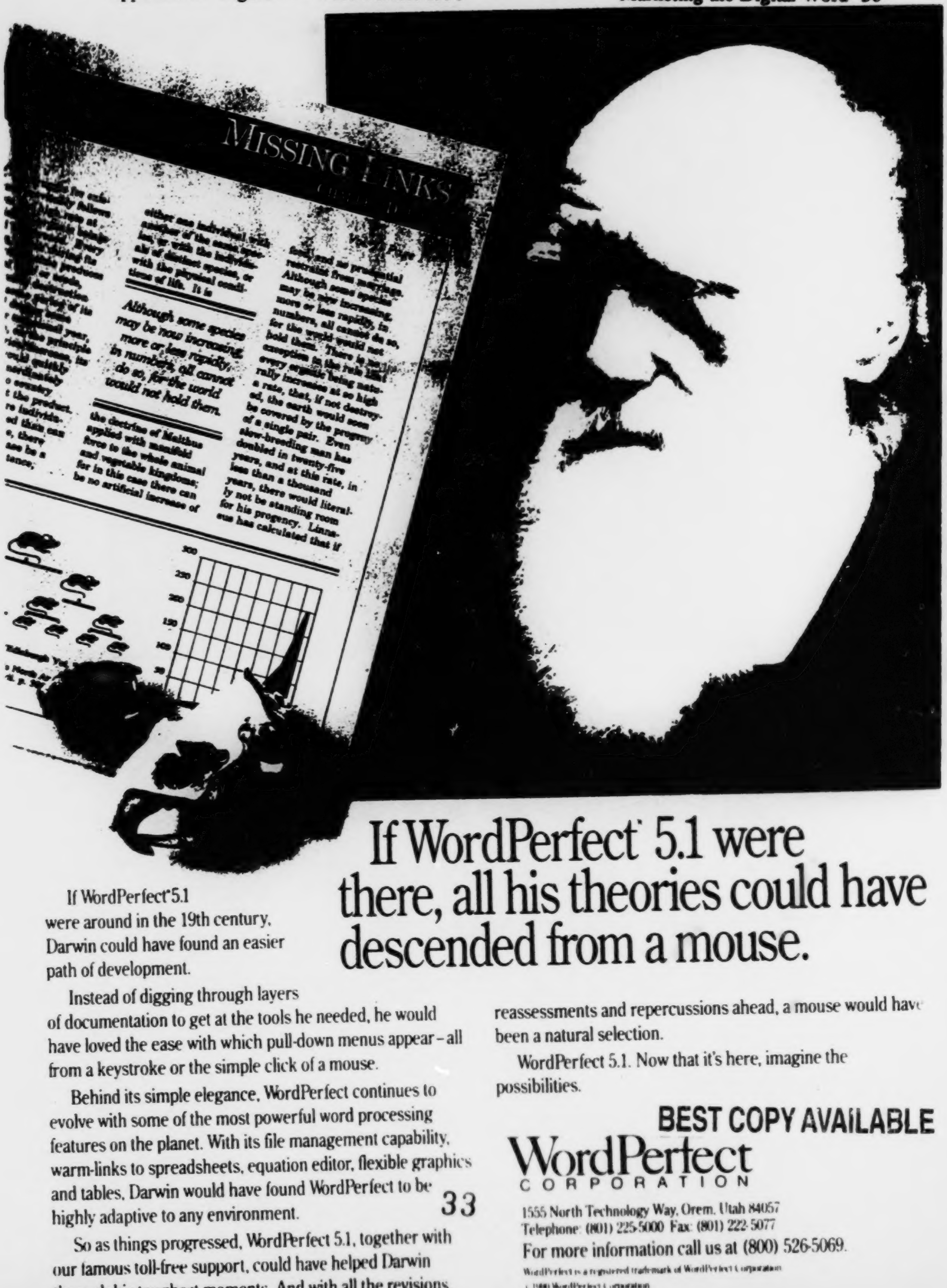
Textra Jr. 39.95

An outstanding text editor.
An outstanding price.

Ideal for:
program editing • simple word processing • dBase II™ programming • works with Visicalc,™ Supercalc,™ Lotus 1-2-3™

P.S. You can upgrade to Textra at any-time for the difference in price.

Appendix 2: Figure 4 -- Word Perfect 1990


MISSING LINKS

If WordPerfect® 5.1 were there, all his theories could have descended from a mouse.

If WordPerfect® 5.1 were around in the 19th century, Darwin could have found an easier path of development.

Instead of digging through layers of documentation to get at the tools he needed, he would have loved the ease with which pull-down menus appear – all from a keystroke or the simple click of a mouse.

Behind its simple elegance, WordPerfect continues to evolve with some of the most powerful word processing features on the planet. With its file management capability, warm-links to spreadsheets, equation editor, flexible graphics and tables, Darwin would have found WordPerfect to be highly adaptive to any environment.

So as things progressed, WordPerfect 5.1, together with our famous toll-free support, could have helped Darwin through his toughest moments. And with all the revisions, reassessments and repercussions ahead, a mouse would have been a natural selection.

WordPerfect 5.1. Now that it's here, imagine the possibilities.

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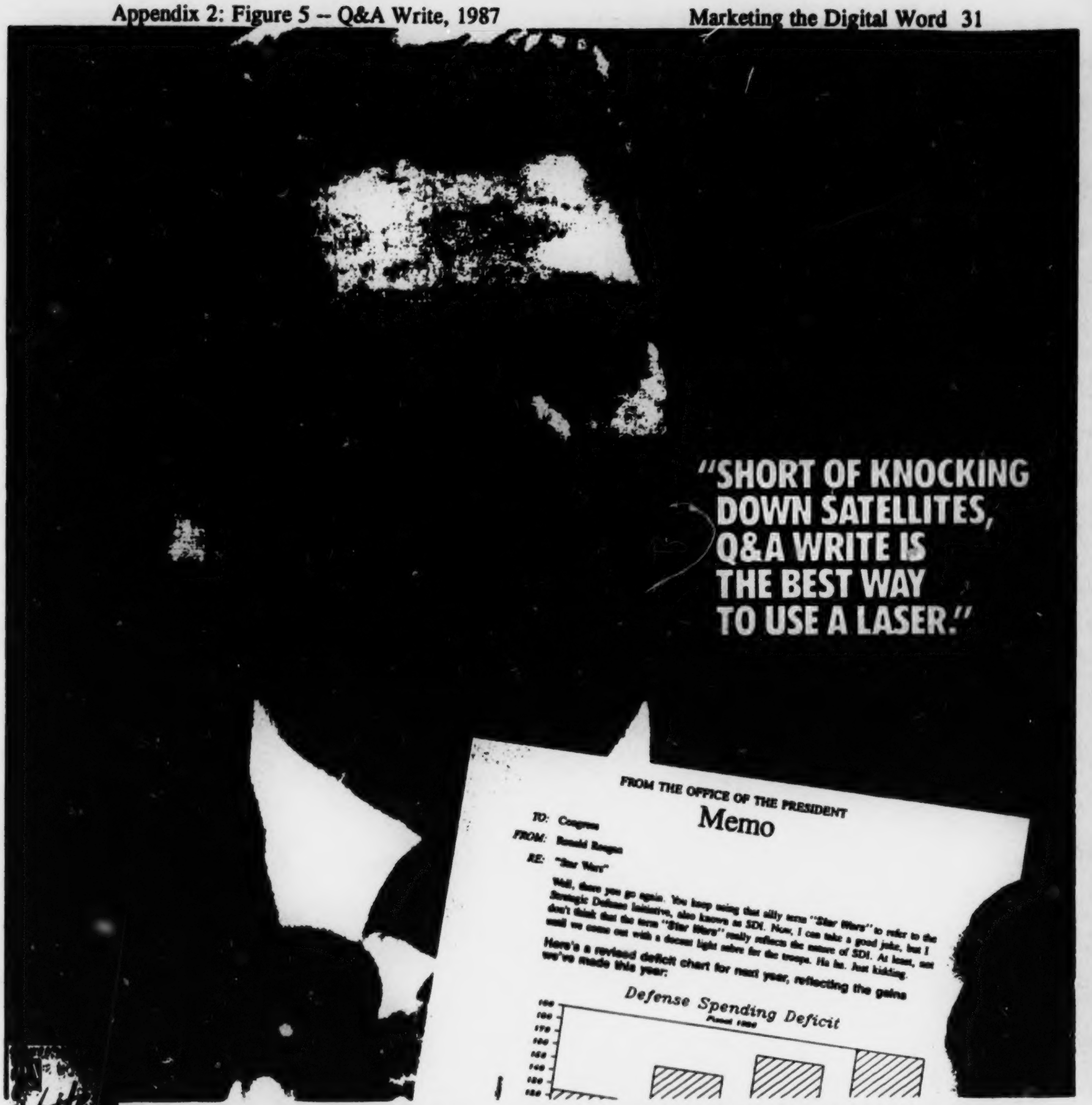
WordPerfect
CORPORATION

1555 North Technology Way, Orem, Utah 84057
Telephone: (801) 225-5000 Fax: (801) 222-5077
For more information call us at (800) 526-5069.

WordPerfect is a registered trademark of WordPerfect Corporation.
© 1990 WordPerfect Corporation


"SHORT OF KNOCKING DOWN SATELLITES, Q&A WRITE IS THE BEST WAY TO USE A LASER."
Defense Spending Deficit

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Memo

TO: Congress
FROM: Ronald Reagan
RE: "Star Wars"

Well, there you go again. You keep using that silly term "*Star Wars*" to refer to the Strategic Defense Initiative, also known as SDI. Now, I can take a good joke, but I don't think that the term "*Star Wars*" really reflects the nature of SDI. At least, not until we come out with a decent light sabre for the troops. *Ha ha. Just kidding.*

Here's a revised deficit chart for next year, reflecting the gains we've made this year:

Some people are fascinated by lasers. They love the power. They love the speed. That's why we developed a word processor called Q&A Write. Along with a laser printer, Q&A Write presents your ideas in a better light. As easily as pushing a button.

Take Mr. Reagan's memo, for example. Q&A Write headings stand out with larger, more stylish letters called fonts. Strategic reminders are in italics. And the deficit chart comes from Lotus 1-2-3. Q&A Write uses fonts as easily as it uses underlining. Which gives you better looking documents. In a few simple keystrokes.

Q&A Write comes ready to use with the HP LaserJet and even drives Postscript printers like the Apple LaserWriter. Because it's an enhanced version of the Q&A word processor *Software Digest* rated #1 for its ease of use,* Q&A Write is perfect for corporate professionals who don't have time for word processing. But need a fast, easy way to present ideas on a laser or any printer. Using PCs, PS/2s, or even networks.

At $199 (about the same as a laser cartridge) those who try Q&A Write buy it. So, until November 15th, every 40th caller to the toll-free number below gets a complete Q&A Write package. ABSOLUTELY FREE. If you're not a 40th caller, get a trial-size version for only $9.95. Q&A Write. It sets your laser on stun.

(800) 443-0100 Ex. 884 P

Q&A Write

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CIRCLE 251 ON READER SERVICE CARD

SYMANTEC. *Breakthrough Software Division*, 10201 Torre Ave. Cupertino, CA 95014. *Software Digest Ratings Report, 1987. Q&A Write includes 3½" and 5¼" diskettes. Upgrade from any word processor to Q&A Write for only $89. Q&A Write owners may upgrade to Q&A, the #1 File Manager and #1 Word Processor that understands English for only $150. Please call (800) [illegible] Ext. [illegible] for details. Optional thesaurus and DCA import/export utility available. **Limit 1 call per person/company/address. Q&A and Q&A Write are trademarks of Symantec Corp. Other products are trademarks of their respective holders. © 1987

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RETHINKING IDEOLOGY: POLYSEMY, PLEASURE AND HEGEMONY IN TELEVISION CULTURE

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RETHINKING IDEOLOGY: POLYSEMY, PLEASURE AND HEGEMONY IN TELEVISION CULTURE.

Introduction

By the mid-1980s active audience theory became an important approach in television and popular culture studies, which led to the reconceptualization of the nature of mass culture. Television, particularly, was regarded as a cultural resource rather than a tool for ideological domination (Saenz 1992, 37). It implied the substitution of old categories such as television messages and programs by television texts and intertextuality, audiences by semiotic workers, viewing by "reading" practices, and so on.

However, it was perhaps the dethroning of ideology as a useful category for cultural analysis and media studies that more clearly expressed the theoretical shift that active audience theory implied. If in the early 1980s ideology was the core category in cultural studies (Carey 1989, 97; Hall 1986b, 65), by the end of that decade it had become a term to be avoided if one wanted to deal with mass culture adequately. Consequently, the focus of analysis shifted from the ideological effects of the media to meaning as a process of negotiation (Morley 1996, 280). The retreat from ideology, however, was not distinctive of cultural studies, but a consequence of the post structuralist and post modernist theories and fashions so prevalent in the mid-1980s. Ideology was seen as one of the "totalizing categorizations" (Curran, Morley, and Walkerdine 1996, 2) that were to be abandoned as part of the rejection of the grand theories of the past.

This paper tries to grasp the nature of this theoretical shift in Television Culture, Reading the Popular and Understanding Popular Culture, three of the major works by John Fiske. It focuses on his move from ideology to polysemy, social relevance, and pleasure as the crucial categories for popular culture and television studies, a shift that is built upon the category of the text and a liberal, pluralist interpretation of hegemony.

The active audience approach has been criticized as "new revisionism" (Curran 1990), "cultural populism" (McGuigan 1992) "pointless populism" (Seaman 1992), opportunist Gramscianism (Harris 1992), and so on. Particularly, Fiske's work has attracted considerable criticism during the last years. Morley (1996, 286) has stressed the heavy influence of Fiske in the U.S., and Hardt (1992, 192) sees his work as "an ideologically attractive and politically relevant example of a Cultural Studies approach in the American context."[1] Likewise McGuigan (1992, 75) argues that Fiske's theory, which he regards as theoretically flawed and politically misleading, is so pervasive "that his work should not be simply ignored as a peculiar aberration."

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[1] In his debate with Morley, Curran (1996, 297) argues that there are "Fiskean and non-Fiskean perspectives" in cultural studies and audience research. Morley (1996, 286) goes a step further and suggests that the Fiskean perspective, a form of postmodern and conservative pluralism, is "principally American."

I build on and agree with much of this criticism, but I will focus on ideology, a core aspect of Fiske's work that has not attracted attention enough. This paper discusses in some detail his claims that textual ambiguity, social relevance and the centrality of pleasure for television audiences underlie the latter's resistance to the control of dominant ideology, thus rendering the power of the media ineffective. Borrowing from the works of Antonio Gramsci, Stuart Hall, Justin Lewis, and Raymond Williams, I suggest that ideology, understood in its dynamic relation with hegemony and common sense, and as part of the concept of social reproduction, is still a necessary category for cultural and media studies.

In the remainder of this paper I provide some background on the category of the text, discuss Fiske's idea of polysemy as textual excess and his claim of pleasure as an ideology free domain. Finally, in the last section, which is an attempt to rethink ideology, I expand the theoretical stands that underlie my critique of Fiske's works.

1- From closed programs to textual polysemy.

Critics have distinguished between a traditional and a critical approach for the understanding of media texts in cultural studies. The former (the Frankfurt School and Althusserian textual analysis) conceives of the text as ideologically closed, and the latter (reception theory) as narratively and ideologically open (Livingstone 1991, 294).

The mass culture critique of the Frankfurt School sees media programs as impoverished, degraded artworks that reduce people's consciousness to a mirror of the economic and ideological forces behind the culture industry (Horkheimer and Adorno 1972, 124). A television program is a multilayered, complex structure that compresses both an overt and a hidden message, but it is no more than a controlling devise that channels the audiences' reaction and cheats them of the pleasures and enjoyment it promises (Adorno 1960, 601-2; Horkheimer and Adorno 1972, 139). Similarly, Althusserian textual analysis regards texts as powerful artifacts that encourage the audiences' identification with and incorporation into the dominant ideology that those texts convey. For both, "texts always and irresistibly tell us how to understand them" (Turner 1990, 107).

The active audience approach is a reaction against this sort of textual determinism. It began with Hall's encoding-decoding model, then followed with Fiske's social relevance or semiotic excess model, and ended up with the dissolution of the text into the contexts of reception and interpretation, as more recent developments and Fiske's own work show (Moores 1993, 16-30). Thus, as a semiotician suggests, in the last two decades the text has become "only a picnic where the author [the culture industry] brings the words [messages or programs] and the readers bring the sense" (Eco 1992, 24). Then, we have reached a cultural condition in which "the diner must be satisfied with the menu" (Horkheimer and Adorno 1972, 139). It is in this context that Fiske's theory of the televisual text can be better understood.

Drawing upon Barthes's distinction between "works" and "texts," which became a core assumption of post modernist cultural theory (Jameson 1991, xvii), Fiske sharply differentiates the category of television programs or messages from that of television texts. In doing so, he sets the basis for a further distinction between the power of the culture industry to produce ideological representations and "the power effectiveness of a program on the audience" (Lodziak, quoted by McGuigan 1992, 125), which underlies his claim of the powerless culture industry and powerful audiences.

Accordingly, a program is the stable, fixed entity defined by the culture industry, sold as commodity by its producers, and organized by schedules into distribution packages (Fiske 1987, 14). It is an "embryonic content" (O'Sullivan et al. 1994, 178-9, 317) that becomes a text at the moment of reception when "one of its many audiences activates some of the meanings/pleasures that it is capable of provoking" (Fiske 1987, 14). A text, therefore, "consists of a network of codes working on a number of levels and is thus capable of producing a variety of meanings according to the socio-cultural experience of the reader" (O'Sullivan et al. 1994, 317-8). In this view, the text can be conceived of as the reactivation of the potential meanings of a program in the particular situation of a spectator at the moment of reception, which is a view close to that of Benjamin 1968, 221).

Turner (1990, 119-23) differentiates three notions of the televisual text in Fiske's works. First, there was the "consensual model of cultural production" of his and Hartley's Reading Television (Fiske and Hartley 1978). Built on Hall's encoding-decoding model, it assumed a balance between textual determination and audience creativity (Fiske 1992, 296-299, and Hartley and Fiske 1978, 77-84). The second model is the polysemous text or semiotic excess of the major works discussed in this paper (Fiske 1987, 1989a, and 1989b). This position assumes that, since television produces more meaning than it can control, television texts are inherently ambiguous and contradictory. In a third formulation, that of "Meaningful Moments" (Fiske 1988), there is no text and no audience, "there are only the processes of viewing" (quoted in Morley 1966, 287; Turner 1990, 120, 122-3). Nevertheless, I see the third moment as a particular inflection of the model of semiotic excess.

2- Beyond ideology: polysemy and social relevance.

According to Fiske (1989b, 103-4), the televisual text is a "producerly text," a powerless artifact whose main features he defines in terms derived from Barthes' distinction between readerly and writerly texts. The readerly is a closed, easy-to-read and highly ideological text that asks for the reader's passive and disciplined acceptance of its prepackaged meanings. In contrast, the writerly is an open, hard-to-read, avant garde text that foregrounds its own textual structure and invites the reader's participation in the construction of its meanings. The producerly text combines the easiness of the former and the opportunities for reader's productivity of the latter (Fiske 1989b, 103-4).

The producerly text is a familiar cultural commodity, "an inescapable element of popular experience in a hierarchical, power-structured society" (Fiske 1989b, 104). It is easy to read because it "does not challenge the reader to make sense out of it, does not faze the reader with its sense of shocking difference both from other texts and from the everyday" (Fiske 1989b, 103-4). Consequently, the producerly text does not require of its readers the deciphering activity that the avant garde text is obliged to elicit. That is, the producerly text is the object of a specific mode of cultural participation that in the early 1930s Benjamin (1968, 240-1) thought of as a distracted mode of perception. He understood this form of cultural practice as a distinctive feature of modernity, the outcome of industrialization, the new media technologies, particularly film, and the presence of the masses as a cultural agent.[2]

However, the reactivation of the texts in the process of reception, so Fiske (1987, 14) argues, is a conflicting one. It brings the forces of production into confrontation with the forces of reception and "reproduces the conflict of interests between the producers and the consumers of the cultural commodity." Conflict or contradiction is, indeed, a crucial notion because it allows Fiske to link the social and the semiotic realms. Contradiction provides the linkage between social reality and popular texts, modes of reception and television textuality. Thus, Fiske poses an unproblematic relationship between social conflict and textual polysemy for, he argues, "as society consists of a structured system of different, unequal, and often conflicting groups, so its popular texts will exhibit a similar structured multiplicity of voices and meanings often in conflict which each other" (Fiske 1987, 90).[3]

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[2] I will bring some of Benjamin's ideas on modern culture and media technologies into the debate of Fiske's theory. I am aware, however, that the former's insights cannot be collapsed into the cultural studies approach. In addition, and in spite of Willis's (1991, 11) assertion that Fiske is "another contemporary exponent of Benjamin," the influence of Benjamin on Fiske is problematic because he is not among the sources Fiske quotes in the major works consulted for this paper; at least not until 1991, when in his "Popular Discrimination" Fiske (1991, 106) partially supports his idea of popular aesthetics on Benjamin's work. My generalization of Benjamin's ideas as part of the active audience theory deserves a more careful treatment. Buck-Morss (1986), however, shows that such sort of generalization may be useful for a critical understanding of current cultural processes. McRobbie (1994b) provides a view of Benjamin's relevance for cultural studies.

The text is conceived as a state of tension between dominant, ideological forces of closure and subordinated, resistant forces of openness (Fiske 1987, 84). Accordingly, television textuality is defined as a "heterogeneous and contradictory regimen" whose texts are not "one discourse but a bundle of discourses that connect with a viewer who is also a bundle of discourses" (Deming 1986, 41).

Polysemy, the potential multiplicity of meanings of a television text (Fiske 1987, 15-6), becomes the core of television textuality. It is coterminous with the notion of social contradiction and constitutes "the textual equivalent of social difference and diversity" (Fiske 1987, 16). Since Fiske sees decoding as determined by the social conditions of the individual audiences, not by the narrative and ideological features of the message or program, polysemy refers to the open nature of the textual structures of television and the productive modes of reception that such an ambiguity allows and demands (Fiske 1987, 15-16; see also

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[3] This direct correspondence between social structure and textual polysemy is built upon a deterministic view. According to it, the position an individual or social group occupies in the social structure necessarily leads to a distinctive class consciousness; similarly, in spite of the dominant ideological representations that programs embody, in the process of reception texts necessarily and directly reflect this diversity of ideological positioning. This is the main assumption of Fiske's notion of social relevance. This form of reductionism, however, is not exclusive to Fiske; it is a view common to other cultural studies scholars, for example Hebdige (1993, 367).

Turner 1990, 91).[4] This is transparent in his idea of television's semiotic excess.

In the model of semiotic excess "texts are seen to be loaded with an excess of meanings, leaking through the boundaries of any 'preferred' readings into the social formations of the readers, and thus producing a range of meanings and pleasures" (Turner 1990, 117). Accordingly, for Fiske (1987, 58), television is characterized by excess. It is "meaning out of control," an "overflowing semiosis" that brings social norms and ideological control to light in such a way that the arbitrariness of those social norms and the constructedness of common sense are made evident (Fiske 1989b, 114-6).

Polysemy, then, evolves from a textual and semiotic category to a political means for redemptive cultural practices. Television's excess allows it to serve as the conveyor of dominant ideology and, simultaneously, to reveal the latter's arbitrariness and naturalness. Television becomes the conveyor of Benjamin's dialectical image, one that is simultaneously a representation and a critique of cultural artifacts and practices (Buck-Morss 1986, 108-9; and McRobbie 1994b, 107).

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[4] Polysemy is also implied in the process of reactivation of the artwork that Benjamin foresaw, a process that rests very much in the particular context of reception rather than in the artwork's own narrative. Reproducibility makes available a multiplicity of copies, and those copies of the same piece cannot have a unitary meaning in the diverse contexts of reception. Drawing on Buck-Morss, McRobbie (1994b, 113) suggests that Benjamin's notion of the "multiaccentuality of the sign" refers to the contradictory nature of commodities and the instability of the meaning of modern artifacts and cultural processes. From another perspective, Volosinov (1973, 20, 41) provided a strong foundation for a theory of polysemy, which he called multiaccentuality and conceived of as a core feature of language and culture.

Furthermore, for Fiske, polysemy is not a feature of certain television texts in contrast to others that are less open, as more cautious accounts suggest (for example, Allen 1992, 107). Due to a sort of semiotic reductionism in which textuality is an unmediated reflection of social conditions and polysemy is a result of the determination of viewers' readings by the contexts of their everyday life (social relevance), all television texts seem to be condemned to polysemy. For, according to Fiske, even the most realistic narratives cannot escape polysemy and reader creativity. Thus, for example, despite the claim to objectivity of news programs, their fragmentary and segmented nature fights against the narrative structure and "works to open up its meanings" (Fiske 1987, 144, 162, 305).

Those undisciplined signifiers cannot be controlled because "the motor of polysemy is the diversity of social situations of the text's readers" (Fiske 1987, 144). As a text out of dominant control, the producerly one is a means for popular production,

> It exposes, however reluctantly, the vulnerabilities, limitations, and weaknesses of its preferred meanings; it contains, while attempting to repress them, voices that contradict the ones it prefers; it has loose ends that escape its control, its meanings exceed its own power to discipline them, its gaps are wide enough for whole new texts to be produced in them--it is, in a very real sense, beyond its own control (Fiske 1989b, 104).

Since polysemy is television's fate, all its narrative features (nowness, liveness, its oral and dialogic nature, and the segmented and associative nature of its "oceanic" flow) work to reinforce it.[5] Furthermore, these narratives have plenty of "scandalous" misuses of language (puns, jokes, irony, clichés, and the like) that reproduce and reveal social contradictions at the textual level, work against discipline and domination, and allow the viewer's free associations in the process of meaning making (Fiske 1987, 85-6; 1989b, 106-14).

However, despite Fiske's explicit acknowledgment of the tension between the forces of closure and forces of openness in television narrative, he ends up underestimating the social determinants of television texts and celebrating reception as the moment of people's creativity and popular empowerment.[6] Television texts end up being a set of pure signifiers or empty structures, and meaning is entirely contingent on reception (Fiske 1987, 84-5, 96).

Meaning, therefore, is produced at the moment of reception or decoding, not at that of production or encoding. It is the autonomous creation of the viewers in the process of their conscious choosing and rejecting the offerings of television institutions, which Fiske calls popular discrimination. This process is driven by the social conditions of the viewers and "is concerned with the potential uses of the text in [their] every day life" (Fiske 1989b, 110). This Fiske calls social relevance, which he understands as the interconnections between the text and "the immediate social situation of its readers," interconnections that he sees as created by the autonomous subjectivity of the viewers, not determined by dominant ideology (104-5)

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[5] Fiske (1987, 85-107, 145-7; and 1989b, 106-27) and Fiske and Hartley (1978, 49-50, 65-67, 83) describe and explain these features in some detail. See Allen (1987, 127) for the idea of television's "oceanic flow."

[6] Frow (1995, 61) makes the same point, but in more general terms. Following Frith, he argues that the cultural studies approach and Fiske work at once assert and deny "the relevance of the conditions of production to the workings of the text."

Thus the category of polysemy leads Fiske to see in television texts the embodiment and fulfillment of Benjamin's "I have nothing to say, only to show" (quoted in McRobbie, 1994b, 107). For him, the televisual text shows the obvious, and by doing so "it makes gaps and spaces in the text for the producerly reader to fill from his or her social experience and thus to construct links between the text and that experience" (Fiske 1989b, 122).

Through this process, television texts serve two masters at once. As commodities (programs, messages) they satisfy the profit-making needs of their producers and embody their ideology, but as cultural resources they are the means for people's creativity. Popularity, therefore, is the condition that mediates between producers and viewers, but it is a creation of the people, not of the producers (Fiske 1987, 93). Thus, polysemy links textual features, the economic needs of television producers and people's needs and feelings into a whole where the differences among those three elements vanish.

The relationship Fiske finds between polysemy and popularity is a result of the direct correspondence he sees between semiotic and social conditions, and leads to the topic of the next section. But before going into it, some critical remarks on the idea of polysemous texts are in order.

First, as Turner (1990, 123) suggests, the concept of the text is very complex and contradictory for, on the one hand, it implies the idea of ideological reproduction, the positioning of the readers by the text, the textual preference for specific meanings and its working to impose them, but, on the other hand, a text may also contain the potential for resistance and the possibilities for the making of oppositional readings. This tension is transparent in Fiske's account of television texts and he does point out their complex nature. However, since he conceives of polysemy as total openness, he also falls short of explaining the permanent contradiction between openness and fixity, that is, television industry's planned attempt at controlling viewers decoding and the latter's spontaneous struggle for escaping it.

Trying to counter the ideological determinism prevalent in the early 1980s, Fiske ends up on the totally opposite side. Nevertheless, the parallel between his view and the determinist theories he argues against is remarkable, because his theory is also a reductionist one. He, indeed, poses a direct, unmediated correspondence between textual features and social contradictions, between polysemy and cultural diversity. In doing so, he understates the point that a representation of reality is a reworking of the social relations given in a particular historic period and society rather than a mechanical reflection of them.

In spite of his explicit rhetoric, Fiske does not allow an understanding of the tension between human agency and historical and structural constrains that shape the meanings that people make out of culture industry commodities. He talks of people's cultural practices but those practices are not historically bounded because they are driven by the ideology free subjectivity of the viewers. He misses the fact that "meaning is potentially endless and historically fixed" (Lewis 1991, 57) and that, as Morley (1992, 21) has argued, a program is "not simply a window on the world, but a construction, [and] the audiences do not see only what they want to see." For him, cultural production is the outcome of free-floating, autonomous subjects rather than of a dialectical confrontation between those subjects and the social conditions that shape and constrain their subjectivity and meaning making.

Second, by posing polysemy as a universal feature of all television texts, regardless of the quality of the specific text and the features of the actual viewer, Fiske not only underestimates "the force of textual determinacy" but also neglects "all the evidence of the relatively low level of ambiguity, at some levels of meaning, of widespread systems of signification, such as those purveyed by the mass media" (Morley 1992, 20; see also Corner 1991, 274). Then, Fiske also understates the fact that different texts show different degrees of openness and closure and that, in addition to the dominant and oppositional readings that he talks of, different readers engage in different ways and modes with the television texts they choose to watch (Allen 1992, 105-8).

To not get trapped in this dead end, it is necessary to distinguish between polysemy and polyvalence (Condit 1989, 107-8) or polysemy and pluralism (Hall 1993, 98), to think of several degrees of textual openness and closure of television texts (Allen 1992) and of different audience's responses (Livingstone and Lunt (1994, 14). This would be useful in order to establish to what extent a reading is not only determined by the openness of the text and social relevance, but by the ideological codes of producers and viewers.

We need to think of the ambiguity or polysemy of television texts not as an essence underlying the necessary political and emancipatory nature of peoples' readings but as a strategy of representation that may at once be conservative and bring opportunities for resistant readings and desires for a popular utopia.[7] This could help reveal the possibilities for viewers' creativity with texts in relation with the ideological constraints those texts entail.

3- Beyond ideology: pleasure.

The discussion of the previous section showed the first of Fiske's movements away from ideology. For him, textual ambiguity and social relevance open the television texts in the moment of reception and render ineffective the ideology inscribed in them at the moment of production. Now I want to focus on his treatment of ideology, and his claim that pleasure completes the dethroning of the former as a necessary category for cultural and television studies.

In the cultural studies approach the category of ideology is strongly associated with that of hegemony. Both depend on the assumption of the contradictory nature of society and culture. Social contradictions are the condition for social and political struggle, which lead to the idea of hegemony. Similarly, the expression of social contradiction in culture leads to polysemy and the dialectics of textual openness and closure (Fiske 1987, 32; Hall 1993,98; and 1986, 81; Harris 1992, 117).

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[7] See McRobbie (1994b, 109-12) for Benjamin's concept of "popular utopia" and the "utopian hopes" embedded in cultural commodities. According to Buck-Morss' (1986, 103 and 138), for Benjamin a popular utopia was part of the consumerist dialectics of luxury and misery and could be grounded on the dialectics of "the productive potential of technology and the democratic potential of mass desire." See also Denning (1991) for a postmodernist view of the alienating and emancipatory nature of mass culture.

Gramsci (1970, 40, 57, 266) saw hegemony as the process of political struggle and the forms of cultural leadership that class domination takes in a given society and historical period. It expresses a continuous but historically bounded tension between domination and popular resistance. For him, any social or cultural formation implies the incorporation of the interests of subordinate groups and individuals into those of the dominant classes, which is the result of the former's continuous struggle against domination and the latter's permanent attempt to accommodate those pressures into the prevalent political and institutional frames.[8]

In Fiske's works, however, the notion of hegemony loses this theoretical and political complexity and fades into an endless and pointless struggle. It becomes a Heraclitean flux preempted of its potential for understanding the nature and actual outcomes of the struggle for cultural leadership and social transformation. Fiske writes,

> Hegemony is a constant struggle against a multitude of resistances to ideological domination, and any balance of forces that it achieves is always precarious, always in need of re-achievement. Hegemony's "victories" are never final, and any society will evidence numerous points where subordinate groups have resisted the total

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[8] Williams (1977, 108-114) provides a brief and useful discussion of Gramsci's concept of hegemony. However, he stresses popular struggle over domination, and in doing so he also provides the basis for Fiske-like interpretations of this concept. Hall's (1986c) "Popular culture and the State" shows the usefulness of this concept for the analysis of specific cultural formations.

> domination that is hegemony's aim, and have withheld their consent to the system (Fiske 1987, 41; my emphasis).

This floating notion of hegemony, whose implication for Fiske is people's generalized withdrawing of their consent to the system, provides him with a theoretical basis for his celebration of resistance and popular culture. His argument is simple: people always contest dominant power; therefore, the latter is ineffective, people are powerful, and mass culture is the autonomous creation of the people, a semiotic democracy (1987, 95, 239). Thus, Fiske rejects one of Gramsci's crucial assertions: hegemony is a process of struggle whose specific outcomes are transitory states of equilibrium that, nevertheless, express a correlation of forces in which one of them prevails and rules over the others. As part of this process, so Gramsci (1971, 328) suggested, ideology works to dehistorize those outcomes and present them as universal and natural states.

The naturalization of cultural practices, or the disguising of domination "as conventional wisdom" (Lewis 1991, 182) is common sense's aim.[9] For Fiske "common sense is the organization of a complicity around the interests of the dominant classes that effaces all traces of its mode of production" (Fiske 1989a, 169). It wins consent of the people to dominant interests and forms of representation.

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[9] Thus understood, "common sense" is closer to Althusser's (1971, 161) ideology and Bourdieu's (1986, 164-5) doxa and habitus. As I will argue later, Gramsci conceived of common sense in a rather more positive and useful way.

Common sense is, therefore, "the dominant ideology at work" (Fiske 1989b, 116). It is the instrument of socio-cultural domination because "those who dominate social relations also dominate the production of the meanings that underpin them: social power and semiotic power are different sides of the same coin" (Fiske 1989a, 132).

This approach, however, so Fiske argues, is misleading for it accounts only for a mechanistic explanation of cultural production in which there is no cultural agency and people are "clones of each other" (Fiske 1987, 81). This concept of common sense, indeed, rejects individual and social differences as well as people's capability to autonomously produce their own meanings, which is the core claim of the active audience approach.

Understood as common sense, for Fiske the theory of dominant ideology implies that late capitalist culture is a homogeneous, externally produced culture to be sold ready-made to the people, a claim that he fights throughout his works. For him, there cannot be cultural domination because "culture is a living, active process" that "can be developed only from within" and not "imposed from without and above" (Fiske 1989b, 23). Thus, he abandons the concept of ideology and is compelled to reduce cultural production to a process of free creativity. This point of view is also transparent in his analysis of television's realism.

Television is a "common sense" medium. As with any other media, television does not reflect the real but constructs it, and then naturalizes its own construction in such a way that the difference between reality and fiction is blurred (Hall 1986a, 69; 1993, 95-6; and Turner 1990, 202-3). Its narrative features work to disguise the difference between "the real and its representation" (Fiske 1987, 151).

Television's realism is the main form of the ideological or hegemonic nature of television. Fiske argues,

> We approach the fictional world of [television's] realism with the same familiarity with which we approach the world of our experience: the two worlds are equivalent in that they are open to the same ideological reading practices. But the disguised common sense upon which these practices rest masks the differences between the two worlds (Fiske 1987, 130).

But then the ideological power of television realism is denied. Although, Fiske argues, most television narrative is conservative and its realism is supportive of the status quo, "its effectivity is far more open to doubt" because "a textual structure is a hegemonic line that may, at any time, meet an equivalent line of resistance" (Fiske 1987, 140). In other words, Fiske's pluralist view of hegemony provides a way out of the rhetorical paradox of asserting the power of television in a first moment only to reject it in the next. Since the decoding of cultural commodities is socially rather than textually determined (Fiske 1987, 40), the viewer mocks and escapes the ideological power of television.

Television texts are ideological embodiments, they interpellate and position the viewers, but people's everyday experience. Additionally, television economics also works against ideological closure (Fiske 1987,93) because, in order to reach and appeal to the largest possible number of people to sell them to advertisers, television and each of its particular programs must diversify their menu. The power of the people, therefore, is twofold; first, the points of relevance or connections they make between a program and their social experience vaccinate them against television's ideological power, and, second, their sovereignty as consumers obliges television industries to produce open programs capable of fitting people's own interests and tastes.

Thus, as Eco (1992, 39) has argued in relation to textual over interpretation in literary criticism, no matter the preferences embedded in a program by the dominant ideology, for the active audience approach the glory of television viewers is "to discover that texts can say everything, except what their author [the culture industry] wanted them to mean." Fiske, indeed, writes, "Television is a cultural resource that people use as they wish, not a cultural tyrant dictating its uses and dominating its users" (198b, 153).

A text may prefer some meanings but the actual ones are produced by the active reader and differ from those the text prefers (Fiske 1989b, 146). For Fiske, the text is, therefore, a quasi-natural object whose only function is to provoke people's creativity. Furthermore, this quasi-natural feature meets a similar condition of the reader. Productivity is the result of the viewer's permanent search for pleasure, which for Fiske is a sort of biological feature of the viewer.[10]

Pleasure is beyond ideology and hegemonic control. It is body centered, "a product of nature rather than of culture" (Turner 1990, 219; Fiske 1987, 242). It results from the viewer's playful production of his or her own meanings and identities out of the offerings of television programming. It is the sense of resistance and enjoyment that people experience when they willingly engage with a text and produce new, resistive texts (Fiske 1987, 230). Pleasure is the enjoyment of the sense of control, of fooling television's power and dominant ideology, of engaging with the aesthetic features of television texts without getting trapped by their ideology.

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[10] Pleasure is a central issue for current theories of mass culture and plays a key role in Fiske's theory of popular culture. However, what follows is a brief and general discussion of those aspects of his theory that are relevant to this paper. McRobbie (1994a) offers some useful ideas for the understanding of pleasure within a theory of hegemony and consumption.

Pleasures may be hegemonic or popular. The former are associated with dominant power. They are those of conformity with and incorporation into the dominant ideology (Fiske 1989a, 177; 1989b 175). But, again, consistent with his interpretation of hegemony, Fiske argues that dominant pleasures fail to interpellate people and are ineffective. In contrast, popular pleasures empower people because they result from opposing the dominant power. They occur at the interface between the apparatuses of power and social control and "the intransigent social experiences of the subordinated groups" (Fiske 1989a, 183).

Popular pleasures are produced by the insertion of "one's social identity" in the process of resisting and negotiating with the structure of domination (Fiske 1987, 19). They are necessarily disruptive of the dominant order and ideology. They not only overcome ideology but are the very foundation of resistance (Fiske 1987, 228; and 1989b, 178, 182). Indeed, pleasure alone makes readers active and readings resistant or oppositional.

Thus, with this last movement toward pleasure the retreat from ideology is completed and Fiske has provided a final foundation for his claim of audience productivity. First, resistance appears as a quasi-natural capability of the people because, by virtue of their social subordination, they are able to directly perceive their interests, and, for the same reason, those interests "necessarily conflict with those of the powerful" (Fiske 1988, 248). Second, the oppositional nature of popular readings and popular culture's progressiveness are also guaranteed by pleasure, a cultural practice that, according to Fiske, is on the edge of the cultural and the natural, indeed closer to the latter. Since, in his view, resistance is underpinned by pleasure, it is almost a biological need whose necessary outcomes are oppositional readings and progressive popular culture.

Through his journey from polysemy and empty texts to social relevance and pleasure, Fiske points out the textual features of television that allow people's enjoyment of television's textuality. He also presents a compelling argument regarding the correspondence between television texts and people's everyday life, which help explaining people's complicity with the products of the culture industry.

However, this theoretical move appears as a form of naturalization of culture because he cuts off the conditions of production of television texts from those of their consumption, and the individual subjects from their actual social conditions. In spite of Fiske's rhetoric, which seems to point out the tension between the individual and the social determinants of cultural production, he conceives audiences as abstract, not real and historically positioned individuals dealing with a web of social constraints and possibilities. In Fiske's works individuals appear as ideology free subjects meeting quasi-natural, empty surfaces and producing a floating world of transient images where everything is popular and emancipatory.

Fiske's naturalization of culture is build on the problematic assumption that immediate knowledge of one's everyday life and one's desires and pleasures are beyond ideology. But are they? People, indeed, take pleasure from the programs they watch, and such enjoyment may partially explain the pervasiveness of television viewing as a crucial cultural practice in contemporary society. However, to claim that such pleasure is beyond ideology is taking the argument to a point where it loses its capacity to explain.

Nevertheless, Fiske's emphasis on pleasure, the ways people try to escape the dominant ideology, and the possibilities for people's creativity point to crucial features of contemporary culture. This leads to the need for a renewal of old theories of the dominant ideology that thought of people's desires and pleasures as totally controlled by the system of domination, for instance Baudrillard's (1981, 73-87). However, rather than celebrating pleasure as the realm of free subjectivity, it would be more useful to take account of the kind of pleasures that actual television offerings may provide to the audience, the forces that determine how people conceive their pleasures and make sense of them, and the real interests that people's pleasure serves (Turner 1990, 221, 224).

4. Rethinking ideology: social reproduction and cultural production.

The above sections show how textual polysemy, social relevance, pleasure, and a pluralist interpretation of the Gramscian category of hegemony allow Fiske to claim that ideology is an outmoded category for the understanding of current processes of popular culture. In doing so, Fiske points out crucial features of television culture, but gets trapped in a number of paradoxes that, as shown above, render his theory problematic.

Thus, while social relevance leads him to the idea of an autonomous subject out of the reach of ideology, which is furthered by his claim of pleasure as an ideology free, quasi-biological realm, textual polysemy reduces television texts to mere signifiers with no traces of the ideology inscribed in them in the process of their production. His pluralist interpretation of hegemony as a pointless struggle completes this picture where "people" are powerful and the dominant is only a simulacrum. All this points to a process of naturalization of television viewing that may be very fashionable as a postmodernist account of television culture, but does not help understanding the real processes of meaning making involved in that cultural practice.

In this light, it may be productive to conceive of television culture from the perspective of social reproduction, which implies a dynamic tension between social constraints and people's creativity, and between ideology and hegemony. A starting point would be to realize that the increasing ambiguity, polyvalence, and fragmentation of semiotic systems make current culture an arena of fluctuating structures, where power is also fragmented and in a permanent process of rearticulation at different planes (Lewis 1991, 31, 40-1).

Culture has become a terrain where meaning and cultural practices are less predictable and certain than ever (Lewis 1991, 31; and Harris 1992, 40). However, for that very reason, dominant ideology and other forces of centralization take on unprecedented significance as means for keeping society and culture in tune with the powers that be. Therefore, present cultural conditions would not lead cultural theorists to abandon old concerns about ideological domination and forms of power exerted by specific social groups through specific structures, the mass media and television among them. From this perspective,

> a notion of ideological domination in some form, however qualified by recognition of audience creativity and popular pleasure, remains indispensable and, at least at the textual level, discernible (McGuigan 1992, 178).

Among others, Gramsci (1971, 40, 27, 266) and Williams (1977, 108-113) provide two key elements for rethinking ideology. First, they emphasized the centrality of popular agency in cultural production and, second, their concept of hegemony allowed them to think of social and cultural struggle as a permanent but historically bounded process, one in which people resist domination, but the dominant forces keep in control of crucial social and cultural processes.

Gramsci (1971, 345) argued that individuals and subordinated groups were historically constrained, yet creative cultural agents, which meant that, for them, social power and ideological domination were permanently contested and resisted. The outcomes of this resistance, however, were not the creation of the subordinated individuals or groups alone, and to the extent that the power bloc kept partial control of them, they were not necessarily popular and emancipatory (Gramsci 1985, 382). They were part of the whole process of social reproduction, and it was in this process where they took their concrete meaning, whether popular or dominant, whether emancipatory and progressive or conservative.

Williams understands this as a process of social determination and reproduction, which he sees as "a complex and interrelated process of limits and pressures" (Williams (1977, 87) where social factors, included media technologies, "set limits and exert pressures, but neither wholly control nor wholly predict the outcome" of social and cultural practices (Williams 1992, 124).

At the cultural level, the tension between social pressures and individuals' creativity takes the form of a tension between hegemony and ideology. The latter is one of the most significant components of the conditions of domination, but it is not coterminous with hegemony, which includes ideology, but cannot be reduced to it (Hall et al. 1977, 49).

Hegemony is a process of manufacture of consent in order to underpin domination, but ideology is the naturalization of the outcomes of this process. Ideology is the codes and frames of representation and interpretation that shape the process and become naturalized as part of the practice of domination. While it represents the tendency toward fixation of social practices and frames of representation, hegemony is the dynamic factor that historizes ideology and transforms it (Hall et al 1977, 49; 1986c, 73; and 1993, 95).

However, hegemony works by ideology. It permanently attempts to cast all competing perceptions and definitions of reality within the particular frames of dominant ideology, and the latter works to make the former invisible. Thus, as a part of the hegemonic and ideological processes, the media underpin the ideological field that corresponds to the particular conditions of hegemony (Hall 1979, 332-39, 341-6).

Common sense is a crucial factor of this tension between ideology and hegemonic struggles. Following Gramsci (1971, 196, 324-6, 348 and 421) who saw it in a positive way, common sense can be thought of as the contradictory, fragmented, inarticulate and spontaneous philosophy of everyday life that, precisely because of those features, allow individuals (as such or as a collective group) to attenuate, evade, or even escape from or reject dominant ideology. Common sense is, therefore, an arena of struggle that the dominant powers aim to colonize and a space for peoples' creativity and spontaneity.[11] However, unlike the Fiskean idea of social relevance and everyday life, in this view common sense is not the locus of ideology free subjectivity and autonomous popular pleasures. It is a middle ground where individuals' subjectivity and their cultural practices are negotiated according to the spontaneous needs of daily life but in given social conditions, which include the patterns of ideological representation of the world prevalent in that social formation.

At this level, everyday life and the specific social situation of the individuals help us begin accounting for contestation as a complex interplay of, to paraphrase Volosinov's (1973, 20, 41), the individual's psyche, directly affected by his or her immediate needs and desires, and the dominant ideology, an expression of the social structure and the powers that be. The latter attempts to control individual's whole life, beginning with its needs and desires, but it does so only partially, because it cannot exhaust social practice and the "living interaction of social forces" (41). Competing "social accentuations" of the systems of representation and communication develop, and culture becomes a dynamic process of interaction and negotiation that resembles neither the top-down imposition of the dominant ideology approach nor the bottom-up unconstrained creativity of Fiskean theories.[12]

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[11] Hall and his colleagues (Hall et al. 1977, 49) suggested an interpretation of Gramsci's concept of common sense close to mine, but theirs was basically framed within an Althusserian concept of ideology and it is this view which prevails in Hall's (1979, 1986a, and 1986b) later works.

From this perspective, the tension between ideology and hegemony is not an abstract one between macro powers or forces beyond people's experience. It is one that people live in their own daily life, for example when watching television, one that directly affects people perception of their experiences, their needs, their cultural tastes, and so on. In contrast to Fiske's account, this dialectical relationship between ideology and hegemony with the mediation of common sense helps explain the tension between openness and closure of television texts and encoding-decoding practices. Through common sense people engage in everyday hegemonic struggles and push for textual polysemy, in contrast, ideology works to close it down, promotes naturalization of socio-cultural practices, and strengthens social tendencies toward closure (Lewis 1991, 55).

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[12] A pluralist interpretation of Volosinov's thought has prevailed in cultural studies that led to problematic formulations of core issues. Thus, for example, his idea of the dialogic nature of language underlies the view of the powerless dominant ideology (Fiske, in the works already cited), the claims of the autonomy of ideology and cultural formations in relation to social classes (Hall, 1981) and the post modernist belief that contemporary culture is no more than a staging of counter-hegemonic styles (Hebdige 1993)

Although television does not necessarilly enforce a preferred meaning, the television industry and its products are part of those ideological forces and social constraints working to control how people make sense of the world, including the medium itself and its programs. It is a powerful instrument "with the power to influence the way we think about the world" (Lewis 1991, 61-2, 67-8). It is a "system of causal constraints" that, at least partially, define the environment within which people freely choose among television offerings, produce meanings according to their social position and their own representation of it, and take pleasure from that process (Seaman 1992, 307; see also Livingstone 1991, 303).

This function is the result of television intertextuality, that is, the range of the ideological and aesthetic assumptions that producers share with viewers, and the wide areas of cultural homogeneity within which its contents and forms work as the common cultural currency (Lewis 1991, 63-4). But television intertextuality is countered by people's spontaneous knowledge of their own cultural conditions, interests, and tastes; a form of knowledge which is in a permanent process of being colonized by and incorporated into the strictures of television and its ideology.

Thus understood, this notion of social reproduction may be useful for understanding diverse degrees of textual openness and the productivity of the audience. Thus, as Klinger (1991, 12 and 130) has shown regarding film, the viewers take the offerings of the media industry, whose texts may be highly open, and rework them; and they do so on the grounds of the perception of their own quotidian experience. However, since the social "is also a site of closure" (Morley 1992, 28-9), a field mined with dominant ideology, the viewers' perception of their everyday life and interests is not necessarily ideology free.

If so, the possibility arises that what Fiske calls social relevance (the set of people's needs, desires, feelings that get satisfied by television programs) is, in fact, "ideological resonance," that is, the fitting up to a certain point of those popular desires and needs into the frames and interests of the dominant ideology (Lewis 1991, 143; Klinger 1991, 122, 131-2).

This argument does not reject audience's productivity nor deny the possibility of alternative and oppositional readings but it sees those cultural practices as part of the, to use Slater's (1993, 207) great metaphor, "dialectical knife-edge" between people's cultural agency and domination. The categories of social reproduction, ideology, hegemony and common sense thus understood recognize the potential of textual openness for cultural productivity, the reactivation of popular artworks in the particular situation of the viewers, and the centrality of pleasure and viewers' subjectivity for cultural processes, but deny that these features of television viewing and popular culture may be progressive by themselves.

To sum up, I propose to rethink ideology in terms of the tension between social determinants and people's creativity, ideological interpellation and common sense as a first but crucial moment of the struggles for hegemony. This would help us to "ponder the connection between the glittering surfaces of mass culture and the mechanisms of coercion they conceal" (Lears 1988, 140), as well as the emancipatory or utopian potential they provide. Social reproduction, ideology, hegemony and common sense are, therefore, an indispensable complement to Fiske's notions of textual polysemy, social relevance, and pleasure.

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Low power FM:
A small history

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Running Head: LOW POWER

Abstract

This study investigates low power broadcasting, its basis in non-commercial FM radio, how the FCC first licensed and encouraged its development, and the reasons it eventually did away with it. Today, when both the commercial and public broadcasters have become bigger and more centralized, it is important not to forget that the 'little' broadcaster was once a part of the radio mix and that even when no longer legal, the needs and interests for this broadcaster have not gone away.

Low power FM:
A small history

Introduction

This study will investigate low power broadcasting, its basis in non-commercial radio, how the FCC first licensed and encouraged its development, and the reasons that the FCC eventually did away with it. In the process I also will show low power broadcasting's place in the development and changes in non-commercial broadcasting over the past 60 years: how low power FM helped non-commercial radio survive and grow when little money was available, and then, when the government finally endorsed a system of public radio in the United States, these newly funded non-commercial broadcasters pressured the FCC to do away with the low power stations.

In a day and age when both the commercial and public broadcasters have become bigger and more centralized, it is important not to forget that the 'little' broadcaster was once a part of the radio mix and that even when no longer legal, the needs and interests for this broadcaster have not gone away. With developments in the communications marketplace aimed primarily at the more affluent sectors of the population (McChesney, 1993) there has been increasing interest in low power broadcasting that can serve local and often ignored populations (Cockburn, 1995). By investigating the history of this type of broadcasting, I hope to lend a greater understanding to why we have the current non-commercial radio system how prohibitions against low power broadcasting ignore some of the great advantages of radio technology.

Rationale

In *The Invisible Medium* Lewis and Booth (1990) point out the unique and powerful aspects of radio and the absence of scholarly studies of it. They call for more research into "why we have the radio we do, [and] what radio we could have if things were different" (p. xiii). Similarly, McChesney (1993) talks about how the "other aspects of United States broadcasting history are relegated to the margins, which is necessary to maintain the untenable "immaculate conception" notions of the origins of commercial broadcasting" (p. 258). This same idea is true of the current non-commercial radio system in the United States. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting and National Public Radio often are thought of as saviors of non-commercial broadcasting. Most of the histories of non-commercial radio in the United States acknowledge the broadcasters who existed before NPR (Collins, 1993; Looker, 1995). But they either downplay these broadcaster's role in presenting a local and inexpensive alternative to commercial broadcasting or they portray these stations as a foundation for NPR (Kosof, 1995). In doing so they encourage the thinking that a national system of non-commercial broadcasting is the only alternative to commercial broadcasting.

Lewis and Booth (1990) write about how the founding myths in broadcasting are used to justify the existing system. They see a myth for each type of system: "commercial broadcasting draws on notions of individualism and free enterprise; community radio harks back to a 'community' in which mutual help and solidarity were proof against the abrasions of the outside world; and public broadcasting" is entrusted to "professionals who diagnosed and interpreted the needs of listeners" (p. 1). Although the public broadcasting that Lewis and Booth focus on is the BBC, the analogy can be made to today's public radio in the United States where, in many cases, government funding is dependent on the number of professionals employed by the radio station.

Radio broadcasting in the United States is a multi-billion dollar industry that has undergone drastic changes in the past 15 years due to government deregulation (Ditingo, 1995). A recent study called radio a "microcosm of late twentieth-century corporate America itself - a corporate America governed by consolidation - mergers, acquisitions - and specialization"(Ditingo, 1995 p. xi). These changes have resulted in tremendous profits for commercial broadcasters and increased ratings for non-commercial broadcasters as listeners search for some substance on the radio dial (Turner, 1995). What has been left out in these changes is the small, local community broadcasters who take advantage of the inexpensive nature of radio broadcasting. If allowed, individuals and small non-profit groups can run a station and serve a community at extremely low costs when compared to other electronic media. These are the efforts taken by today's radio resistors. These are individuals and groups who are setting up illegal low power stations in places as diverse as a housing project in Illinois and a storefront cultural center in a small town along California's coast (Ciaffardini, 1996). They are not only serving audiences that the large broadcasters ignore, they are reminding people of the inexpensive nature of radio broadcasting. This is also the story of some of the broadcasters in the past 80 years.

Non-commercial radio

McClendon (1987) points out "it was in the laboratories and experimental stations of college and universities in the 1910s that AM radio got its start" (p.191). Some of the earliest developments in broadcast programming occurred at the University of Wisconsin, the University of Kansas and Cornell University (Collins, 1993; Fornatale and Mills, 1980). From 1920 until 1936, the federal government licensed 202 AM broadcast stations to educational institutions. Programming on these stations was primarily educational and since these stations also were non-commercial, the two terms became intertwined (Brant, 1981).

These educators used radio as a tool for teaching, institutions like the University of Nebraska charged fees for courses taught by radio (Fornatale and Mills, 1980). But the heyday of this type of broadcasting was short-lived. By 1937 only 38 educational stations were still on the air (Brant, 1981). McChesney (1993) has documented the struggles they faced in Washington as the commercial broadcasters lobbied strongly against any type of system that allowed for "a significant portion of the ether set aside for non-commercial and nonprofit utilization" (p.3). But it was not just in the legislation that these broadcasters lost out. Brant (1981) writes that in an environment of limited spectrum space:

> the educational station was fair game when looking for a frequency to repossess. Many of these non-commercial stations were forced to share time on the same frequency with a commercial station. In most cases the educational station had the frequency first but was commandeered by the commercial station.... many colleges gave up their stations. The paperwork was too much to bear (p 16).

Many schools lacked the funds to fight, as they were overwhelmed by the industry (Fortantale and Mills, 1980).

The loss of this fight had profound effects on broadcasting, as the United States organized a capitalist media system (McChesney, 1993). Yet the non-commercial broadcaster was able to find a place in the new FM broadcast technology developed by Edwin H. Armstrong. Almost from its inception, FM was looked upon by educators as a way to expand the system of educational broadcasting. The presence of the National Association of Educational Broadcasters at the FCC's 1940 hearings contributed to the reservation of five educational non-commercial channels of the 40 channels on the FM band of 42 - 50 megacycles (Brant, 1981). By 1941 there were seven educational FM stations on the air. In 1945 the FCC, under pressure from David Sarnoff's Radio Corporation of America, moved FM to new frequencies from 88 to 108 megacycles. Though this was a problem for the few educational FMs already on the air and a major setback for Armstrong's commercial stations, it was an opportunity for educators to have a bigger slice of the pie. The FCC allocated 20 of the 100 frequencies for non-commercial FM stations (Blakely, 1979). These decisions were the first positive actions by the government regarding educational non-commercial broadcasting. Unfortunately these decisions involved FM, a technology that at that time much of the media industry thought a distraction to the industry's primary goal: the development of television.

The birth of low power

Since many colleges and universities had spent much time and money on AM radio only to lose out in the end, something needed to be done to attract educators to the new FM technology. They were not about to spend a lot of time and money on radio only to be pushed out by large broadcasters. Some broadcasters used one of the unique features of radio, its relatively inexpensive nature to operate, to encourage colleges to adopt FM broadcasting. Syracuse University was given temporary authority by the FCC to operate a station at 2.5 watts. After a few months of operation it was given a permanent license and the call letters WAER (Brant, 1981). The FCC gave full approval to the operation of 10-watt stations on August 18, 1948; the previous minimum requirement had been 250 watts (FCC 48-1948). The goal was to assist colleges financially by allowing them to start low-cost operations, with the hope that local interest in the station would encourage colleges and universities to boost their power (Lewis and Booth, 1990).

This small step helped educational broadcasting in a large way. Blakely (1979) tells the story of how these new FM stations were used as a positive example during the 1951 congressional hearing regarding the reservation of television channels for educational broadcasting. The director of research for the National Association of Broadcasters, Kenneth Baker, had cited the poor broadcasting record that educators had in both AM and FM radio, calling them a "dismal failure" (p. 24). He compared the numbers of new commercial FM stations with the small number of educational FMs, even though there were channels reserved for educators. Blakely recounts how FCC Commissioner Freida Hennock thoroughly discredited Baker's testimony regarding the "relatively few" educational FM stations by pointing out how he omitted about eighty 10-watt stations. This interchange helped in the fight for reserved channels for educational television.

While the allowances for low power did encourage many colleges to start FM stations, there was little encouragement to move up in wattage. By 1969 there were 384 FM and 28 AM college stations (Lewis and Booth, 1990). The majority of the FM stations were 10-watts. The lack of interest by the listening public was mostly due to the lackadaisical attitude of the FCC. For years it allowed commercial broadcasters to simulcast their AM programming on their FM stations. It was not until the introduction of FM stereo in 1961 and the implementation of non-duplication rules in 1967, that listeners had a strong reason to turn to FM. They could now find an alternative to the programming on AM. The anti-simulcasting rule, fought so hard by the industry that the deadline for compliance was put off for 18 months (Fornatale and Mills), is a good example of how government regulation can help an industry grow. Once commercial broadcasters were forced to develop their airwaves, FM radio showed great audience growth. In the meantime, the only interesting developments for non-commercial radio occurred outside of the educational institutions.

Community radio

In May of 1948 the FCC granted the first non-commercial license to an organization that was not affiliated with an educational or religious institution. When Lewis Hill and the Pacifica Foundation received a license for KPFA in Berkeley it "set a precedent for more noninstitutional stations to be licensed" (Fornatale and Mills, 1980, p. 171). Much has been written about the growth of Pacifica with stations in New York, Los Angeles and Houston (McClendon, 1987; Fornatale and Mills, 1980; Lewis and Booth, 1990). The Pacifica stations showed how broadcasters could serve their communities with real alternative programming during the red scare of the 1950s, and the civil rights and Vietnam war years in the 1960s. Beyond the important programming that the Pacifica stations broadcast during these times, they helped to establish a new type of radio: community radio.

Lewis and Booth (1990) write that the community type of radio emerged in explicit contrast to the United States commercial and the B.B.C. public service models of radio. They believe that the key difference is "that, while the commercial and public service models both treat listeners as objects, to be captive for advertisers or improved and informed, community radio aspires to treat its listeners as subjects and participants." (p. 8).

The Pacifica stations established the idea that listener supported radio could survive. The programming was a mix of alternative news, left-wing commentary, and shows produced by an eclectic mix of interest groups. Pacifica had problems with pressure from the federal government, infighting among the different groups and even bombings (when trying to build the Houston station). These stations were not owned by the community, but by the Pacifica foundation. Even though they were not true community stations, they still set an example for other broadcasters.

The person who took the next step in developing non-commercial radio was Lorenzo Milam. After working at Pacifica's KPFA, he started KRAB in Seattle in 1962 (Fornatale and Mills, 1980). Milam's goal was to make true community radio, a place where people could "squeeze some of the art back into radio, ... for the poor and the dispossessed to get back on the air, to have a chance to speak and be heard outside the next room, the next block" (Milam, 1975). In addition to Seattle, he helped start stations in Portland, St. Louis, Los Gatos, California, and Dallas. Though none of these stations had long-term success, they proved that community radio was possible on the underdeveloped non-commercial end of the FM dial. Milam's other legacy was publishing "A handbook on starting a radio station for the community" called *Sex and Broadcasting* first published in 1971. The book is a creative patchwork of radio criticism, instructions for dealing with the FCC, programming ideas and excerpts from program guides from some of the stations Milam had developed.

Sex and Broadcasting helped inspire others to try and start community stations many of which are still on the air today. There were enough people interested in the idea by 1975 that a group of them met to help organize the

National Federation of Community Broadcasters, with 12 member stations (Fornatale and Mills, 1980). Four years later they had 35 stations on the air. In the 1980s they grew to 70 members, with an eclectic mix of what was possible to do at the low end of the FM dial. But these were not the only developments concerning non-commercial radio.

Public Radio

In the early and mid-1960s stations like WBFO at the University of Buffalo and WRVR, run by the Riverside Church in New York City, started to air a mix of educational, arts, news and public affairs programming that helped define the difference between what educational radio was and what public radio could be (Collins, 1993). At the same time the Carnegie Commission on Educational Television was building a framework for public television in the United States. Initially plans for public radio were not a part of this effort. Collins gives President Johnson, who had a background in radio (having made money in commercial radio in Texas), credit for insisting that radio be added to the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967. Fornatale and Mills (1980) claim that "only at the insistence of Jerrold Sandler, head of National Educational Radio, were the words "or radio" included in the act" (p. 175).

The Act created the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the funding body for public television and radio. The greatest impact that the CPB has had on the structure of non-commercial radio in the United States came with the standards it set for stations to obtain federal funding. These were the minimum criteria required:

- Stations had to broadcast at least 18 hours per day, 365 days per year.
- Stations had to maintain a full-time professional staff of at least five and have an operating budget of at least $80,000 annually.
- AM stations had to be at least 250 watts, FM at least 3,000.
- Stations had to have adequate facilities to provide for local program production and origination.

- stations had to broadcast programs of good quality serving demonstrated community needs of an educational, cultural or informational nature intended for a general audience (Fornatale and Mills, 1980, p. 176).

These standards excluded the vast majority of non-commercial stations on the air at the time. Only 25 of the 450 non-commercial stations on the air at the time had more that one full-time professional (McClendon, 1987). This was CPB's way to set up a more central, professional, nationwide network of public stations. McClendon calls it a "carrot and stick" approach to encourage stations to move up in power and hire staff. It was a tradeoff that had critics beyond the affected stations. Barlow (1988) points out how National Public Radio provided regular news and public affair programming, training and money and in return "the educational stations adopted a fairly cautious approach to program content and community access, becoming professional, and in most cases elitist, operations with high-brow cultural formats that were tightly controlled from the top down" (p.91).

These changes and policies constitute the first step in eliminating the small stations that had been the central part of non-commercial FM radio for 20 years. In some ways they can be considered a positive approach, since there were financial rewards for stations that changed to met the CPB criteria. The next moves in the 1970s were not so beneficent for low power radio.

The end of 10-watts

The expectations engendered by legislation and funding at the national level were that "public broadcasting should reach more people, address more interests, and generally elevate the quality of electronic media discourse" (Rowland, 1993, p. 161). For those who wanted to move in this direction the low power stations stood in the way. Since their birth in 1948 the number of low power stations had grown slowly and steadily. Many were training grounds for students working under faculty advisors.

Some college used 10-watt stations to serve both their students and the local community. By the mid 1970's 10-watt licenses were the only avenue for radio broadcasting available to colleges like CCNY, Kingsborough Community and the College of Staten Island, in a congested media market like New York City. While there were more than 70 radio stations in the metropolitan area, there were none licensed for Harlem, lower Brooklyn, or Staten Island.

In some cases, 10-watt licenses were the way that community broadcasters got their start. WRFG a 10-watt station in Atlanta was staffed by white and black activists once affiliated with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Students for a Democratic Society. Situated in a low-income neighborhood, its programming was a mix of music, news and public affairs that would appeal to both black and white listeners. The station went off the air for a time in the mid-1970s, due to internal divisions "exacerbated by an undercover agent's act of provocation" (Barlow, 1993, p. 249). Even with its problems, WRFG serves as another example of how the low costs of 10-watt operations allowed for a type of radio station that others were not supplying.

Milam tells what it was like for community broadcasters in the early 1970s: "for the first time since the great wild early days of AM radio, back in the 1920s before the ogres took over our precious Aether [sic], radio operations have become available to anyone who might have that dreadful need to communicate" (p.20). Unfortunately, by the end of the 1970s there was not enough spectrum space to go around.

As the FM dial started to fill up with both low and higher power stations, pressure from National Public Radio stations started to build for the FCC to take some action to try to solve the problem of spectrum space. This was first seen in FCC Docket No. 19816, *Ascertainment of Community Problems by Non-commercial Educational Broadcast Applicants*, adopted July 30, 1975. Ascertainment was a procedure that all commercial stations had to do before the FCC would renew a station's license. It concerned stations' "responsibilities and obligations to determine the problems and needs of their communities and to program in such a way as to meet their needs" (FCC Docket No. 19816 p. 2). Commercial stations were required to determine demographic information of their city of license, interview community leaders, and survey the public to generate the list of the problems and needs. They then had to show how their station's programming would deal with these problems. Until 1975, non-commercial stations were explicitly excluded from these requirements because "given the reservation of channels for specialized kinds of programming, educational stations manifestly must be treated differently than commercial stations" (*ibid.*, p 3). The 1975 rulemaking was a statement by the FCC that it would no longer look at non-commercial stations as specialized. The commission decided these stations could no longer program for specific communities only. These stations were now going to be held responsible for serving their community of license through formal ascertainment procedures.

For the first time the FCC, in its rulemaking questioned whether there should be a distinction between the 10-watt station and other non-commercial licensees. The Commission decided to exempt 10-watt stations for the following reasons: their limited power might not allow them to cover even their entire community; the Commission viewed these stations as primarily designed to serve individuals connected with educational institutions; and part of the function of these stations was to serve as a training ground for broadcast personnel. The FCC also noted that " 10-watt stations are not eligible for CPB grants, which are backed , in part, by federal funds will continue to be ineligible even under the pending long-range financing legislation" (FCC Docket No. 19816, p. 12). The last note is rather strange to include in its reasoning, except that it gives notice that the FCC was going to start letting the national public broadcasting agencies outline what non-commercial radio should be.

While the FCC did not precisely define the role of non-commercial educational stations, something it had yet to do, this rulemaking did show the direction in which it was headed. It included a note that it was reviewing its policy in regard to 10-watt stations. It stated that it had "received a petition for rulemaking from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting requesting amendments to our non-commercial FM broadcast rules" (FCC Docket No. 19816, p. 13). The public broadcasters were starting to make a move on the low power stations.

It was not just the new public broadcasters who pushed for an end to the 10-watters. According to Forantale and Mills (1980), NPR was joined by the National Federation of Community Broadcasters against the approximately 600 10-watt stations on the air:

> NPR wants them out of the way in order to fill out its network and reach 100 percent of the population. The NFCB, even though some of its members are 10-watters, wants them out of the way, too. It feels the spectrum space could be better used. (p. 180).

In the name of efficient use of the airwaves, the community broadcasters joined NPR in moving non-commercial radio away from a mix of small and larger stations to one where medium and large local stations could both serve their communities and be networked to provide a national public radio service.

These moves by NPR caused a tremendous amount of resentment from the college stations. They saw the last player into the game looking to change the rules. According to Jeff Tellis, former president of the Intercollegiate Broadcasting System, NPR didn't understand the college radio stations: "They thought these were sandboxes and kids were playing and were not taking it very seriously" (Tellis interview, 1995).

On June 7, 1978, in Docket No. 20735, *Changes in the rules relating to non-commercial educational FM broadcast stations*, the FCC effectively did away with low power FM. The opening paragraph of the ruling states that it was stimulated by a petition from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting "relating to efficient use of the FM radio channels set aside for non-commercial educational purposes." (p. 1). CPB was asking for a specific channel of assignments similar to what commercial radio had. This is where each community was assigned channel(s) on the spectrum. It could be considered more efficient and fair because up until that time assignments were treated on a demand basis, with no regard for the impact of future assignment needs. Wanting more time to deliberate and needing first to act on the 10-watt issue, the FCC decided not to act on the idea of a table of assignments for non-commercial FM. Instead, the rulemaking centered on the issue of 10-watt stations.

As is usual with rulemakings, the FCC included comments filed by some of the interested parties. One filer in favor explained that 10-watt stations allow starting a station on a small scale and then, after public acceptance, the station can move up in power to extend its coverage and that "closing the door on future 10-watt stations was seen as putting a halt to this process" (FCC Docket No. 20735, p. 11). In response to this, the FCC noted that "40% of the stations that began as ten watts sought or obtained increased facilities, with 60-70% to then at least reach the equivalent of Class A maximum facilities" (*ibid.*, p. 12). These commission figures show the positive effect of allowances for low power.

Another interesting comment dealt with CPB contention that 10-watt stations cluttered the dial, preventing public stations from going on or increasing power. This party said that the answer was for the CPB to drop its restrictions on funding low power stations and give funding to all non-commercial stations. CPB's answer to this was that it would be "one of the least effective ways of making its service available" (FCC Docket No. 20735, p. 18). The CPB was out to remake non-commercial radio, and this apparently did not include the smallest broadcaster.

The argument of the National Federation of Community Broadcasters was that, were it not for existing 10-watt stations, "at least 40-45 new high-power non-commercial FM stations in the top 100 markets could be established and that significant power increases could be obtained for another 25-30 stations" (FCC Docket No. 20735, p. 19). It felt that existing 10-watt stations could be accommodated by moving to unused portions of the commercial dial or by a move up in power on the non-commercial part of the spectrum. The NFCB did not accept the financial argument of 10-watts being a stepping stone to better facilities, claiming that it was not much more expensive to build a higher power station.

The one group to fight for the 10-watt stations was the Intercollegiate Broadcasting System. This organization of over 600 stations, almost half of which were 10-watts, had filed comments in favor of 10-watt stations in both the 1975 and 1978 rulemakings. Here it did not succeed, as the FCC decided to relegate 10-watt stations to a secondary status where they could not cause interference to a higher power station and they themselves would not be protected from interference from other stations. The 10-watters could move to the commercial part of the spectrum if space allowed. The FCC was not terminating these stations, but it was requiring them to move to space where they would not block the expansion of other non-commercial stations. The rulemaking did allow for existing 10-watt stations to exempt themselves from the new rule by increasing their facilities to the minimum Class A level of 100 watts. In order to avoid disruption, the FCC gave stations 18 months to file the applications necessary for this move. This part of the rulemaking was to have a profound effect on the non-commercial spectrum.

The expectations of some observers were that the college broadcasters would go away. Fortantale and Mills (1980) claimed: "the bottom line is that the 10-watters seem to have lost the war. Their numbers will decrease, and more powerful public radio stations will increase" (p. 181). Instead the unexpected occurred. Two-thirds of the 10-watt stations took advantage of the provisions allowing for an increase to 100 watts. According to Tellis, the FCC rulemaking had a positive impact:

> A lot of them (10-watt stations) needed that kick in the pants because they had become complacent about it and they needed something to get them off the dime and it spurred a lot of them to grow up and to serve a wider audience than just a college campus (interview, 1995).

What was expected to be more space on the dial ended up being more college stations at 100 watts, now fully protected against interference from other stations. NPR never got the extra room it thought it was going to get. For the college broadcasters: " we lost the battle but won the war" and "eventually it turned out for the best" (*ibid.*).

While this episode in the late 1970s may have turned to the advantage of college broadcasters, it all but eliminated the low power stations. Those that did not go up in power either moved to the commercial band, if there was space, or stayed at 10 watts, sometimes having to move to another part of the non-commercial band if a public station went up in power. At the same time that the 10-watt stations were changing, the concept of an affordable, entry level broadcast facility disappeared. The end of these small operations also gave a hint of what was to occur in radio in the next decade.

The 1980s

Public radio underwent tremendous growth. Starting with 80 stations, by 1990 CPB supported more than 300 stations that were able to reach 85 percent of the country. Public radio was one of the first operations to build a satellite distribution system. A public radio report bragged, "Stations have developed full-service schedules, built professional staffs and volunteer support, and raised $225 million in nonfederal funds that, with $60 million in federal support, fuels their efforts"(Public radio, 1990, p. 5). The report pointed out how from 1979 to 1989 the number of CPB-supported stations grew by 58 percent while the number of listeners rose by 271 percent. But there was criticism for the way that they carried out these efforts. Lewis and Booth (1990) quote one community broadcaster criticizing NPR for "more concern for sizable budget than service to the community, more attention to professionalism than participation of the public, more emphasis on the power of a station's signal than responsibility to community needs"(p.120).

Like the rest of broadcasting in the Reagan years, the language of the marketplace infected public radio. Some of this was due to the threats of funding cuts, as public broadcasters had to increase audience numbers for both political support and as a base for funding donations (Wicklein, 1986).

This emphasis on audience growth went against what had been a fundamental tenet of non-commercial broadcasting, serving the public. As Robert Blakely (1979), a former member of the Ford Foundation and the National Association of Educational Broadcasters, put it in 1979:

> The goal of most commercial broadcasters is not to entertain or inform but to attract the largest audience possible and to sell... The educational component of our total national broadcasting service, however has but a single purpose - to serve the public interest. This service can treat audiences as receptive, interested persons, not potential customers, and can acknowledge their needs" (p. xii).

While public broadcasting in the 1980s did not abandon its goal of serving the public interest, it paid much more interest to audience demographics, wants and needs. There was formation by the large non-commercial stations of the Public Radio Expansion Task Force. One of the major recommendations of this group was that public stations should be more consistent with programs that "appeal to the same kind of people all the time" (Public radio, p. 15) Instead of having an eclectic program mix within a station, there should be "different kind of stations that serve different kinds of listeners in a consistent fashion" (*ibid.*).

Many of these changes in public radio were precipitated by the almost total deregulation of commercial radio in the 1980s. Formal ascertainment requirements, stipulations for news and public affairs, and limits on the number of commercials stations could air were all eliminated. Probably the biggest change for commercial radio was the end of the three year "anti-trafficking" rule which governed the buying and selling of radio stations.

They could now be bought and sold as a tradable commodity. Total sale of commercial radio stations went from $603 million in 1982 to $3.35 billion in 1988 (Ditingo, 1995.) Individual licenses that were selling for $5 million in the early 1980s went for as much as $80 million by the end of the decade. Station programming moved from having some commitment to public service to one where the only motivation was to make the station more marketable. This left an opening that public radio was poised to fill.

With its highly regarded news and information programming such as *All Things Considered* and *Morning Edition* and the most advanced satellite distribution system in radio, NPR was able to fill the void left by commercial deregulation. By the end of the 1980s these programs were being compared to the *New York Times* as the "radio broadcast of record" (Porter, 1990 p. 30). It was the type of quality news programming that had not been heard in the United States since the days of Edward R. Murrow. But this emphasis on national and international news programming and tailoring stations to demographic interests had its downside. By the mid-1990s NPR was dropping quality programs that were of interest to ethnic minorities, like *Afropop* and *Horizons*, in order to continue to fund the more highly rated and listener-contribution-attracting programs like *All Things Considered*. Thomas Looker, a former NPR producer, in his 1995 book *The Sound and the Story* states one of the fundamental questions of the current debate: "Should public radio build the largest possible audience by catering to current American listening habits, or should public radio offer alternative programming that may be unfamiliar and challenging to many listeners?" (p.405) Public radio in the 1990s has so far looked to address the first part of this question. As it has, a renewed interest in low power radio has emerged.

The new low powers

The concept of illegal broadcasting or pirate radio goes back many years. It had a profound effect on radio in England during the 1960s. There Radio Caroline broadcast from a ship in international waters off the coast of England. The major impetus for these broadcasts was the conservative nature of the BBC and the tight relationships between the few programmers of pop music and certain record companies. There was a void in radio that these pirates were out to fill (Chapman, 1992). A similar void can be found in radio in the United States in the 1990s. Commercial radio stations are treated as commodities to be bought and sold. Public radio operates more and more on a national level. Community radio stations, including the Pacifica stations, are still trying to serve their purpose but often get caught up in internal squabbles (Radio Resistors Bulletin, 1995), and there is no room left on the spectrum for anyone new.

Low power or micropower broadcasters are trying to push their way into this mix. Many of them cite M'Banna Kantako as their inspiration (Ciaffardini, 1996). He has been broadcasting his Black Liberation Radio for a few years from his apartment in Springfield, Illinois. He broadcasts "his own version of the news, reggae and rap music on a brazenly illegal signal on less than one watt of power" (Harrision, 1990). Stephen Dunifer, the leader of the loosely organized radio resistance movement, speaks of him as someone who is performing a much-needed service: "He is serving his community which is a housing project, he's providing a service to the community and the community is totally involved. Younger people - 10, 12, 14 years of age are being trained to do radio" (*Spin*, 1994). Dunifer and other low power broadcasters make every effort to broadcast on unused parts of the FM spectrum in order to avoid interfering with other radio stations. Programming is determined solely by the volunteer broadcasters so one is never sure what he or she is going to hear. Dunifer also sells do-it-yourself transmitter kits so that others can start their own stations (*Wired,* 1995).

In the Fall of 1993 the FCC issued a $20,000 fine to Dunifer for his broadcasts. When he filed an appeal the FCC sought an injunction to stop the broadcasts. In January 1995 Federal District Judge Claudia Wilken rejected the FCC arguments that Dunifer would cause interference chaos (Cockburn, 1995). The case is still dragging on, with Dunifer being aided by the National Lawyers Guild Committee on Democratic Communication. Peter Franck, a representative of the group, ties the issues involved to the history and current state of broadcasting in the United States.:

> Since radio and television were invented the issue has been how to ensure that the airwaves are used in the public interest, and that they are a tool of and for democracy. These developments (the latest mergers and the ruling in the Dunifer case) all prove that the 60 year experiment with government regulation of corporate media is a failure. A relatively weak government can't and won't compel the commercial media to do anything that weakens their profits. Only media like micro radio, free of excessive regulation, cheap, owned by people who broadcast and by their communities can use the airwaves in the spirit of the First Amendment. (Radio Resistor's Bulletin #12).

Conclusion

The history of government regulation of broadcasting does not hold much hope for the new low power broadcasters. The long-standing case for Federal regulations in order to control interference and a track record of supporting those with the most political strength both show that the efforts for the re-establishment of low power broadcasting most likely will fail. The deregulation of the communications industry has encouraged a more highly concentrated marketplace system. It has not only ignored the small broadcasters, it has helped destroy them. McChesney predicts that the current communication revolution "will be aimed primarily at the more affluent sectors of the population" with the result that it "will probably enhance inequality in the population" (1993, p. 259).

Both the history of low power radio and the current activities of the radio resistors show that there are alternatives to the marketplace system. These broadcasters have taken advantage of radio's ability to adapt and change. This ability has allowed it to not only survive but prosper over the years. Unfortunately, one of radio's greatest strengths, its capacity as an inexpensive way to broadcast, has been lost on those who control it.

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The Residue of Culture: An Ellulian Dialogic Analysis of Religious Imagery in a Network Television Drama

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Abstract

This essay uses the work of Postman and Ellul to examine the conflict between religious ideology and the ideology of technological societies A technopoly (Postman's term) must shun religious world views. Yet cultural elements that are deeply imbedded in a society cannot be easily discarded. Religious and technological world views, then, should sometimes clash. Through an analysis of an episode of Picket Fences, I attempt to understand how that clash is presented in the media.

In Technopoly, cultural critic Neil Postman argues that the technological state has developed to a point where it will allow no competitors. A technopolic world view is one in which technical efficiency and progress are the consummate values. Whereas in the 19th century (a period Postman calls "technocracy") many world views were able to coexist, in 20th century all thought worlds that compete with technopoly disappear. Among these alternative thought worlds is religion, which Postman argues is made invisible and therefore irrelevant in technopoly.

In this paper, I analyze the possibility of both the invisibility and the irrelevance of religion within a technopolistic world, specifically looking at one instance of such invisibility and irrelevance, the depiction of religion in a prime-time television drama. Using the work of Neil Postman and Jacques Ellul I investigate the conflict between a technopolistic world view and a theological world view in an episode of the program Picket Fences.

Mass Media in Jacques Ellul's Technological Society

Postman's basic orientation toward the technological world is greatly influenced by the work of French social theorist Jacques Ellul. Ellul is the author of over forty books on sociology and theology, most of them focusing on his overarching theory of technique. For Ellul, the transition from the traditional world to the modern world is not conditioned on the amount or type of machines we use, but a fundamental way of looking at our place in the world. Whereas in previous milieus human beings used tools and machines to accomplish specific tasks within specific historical and cultural settings, today's world is one in which humans are so enamored with technology that the machine becomes the model for society. As Cliff Christians and Michael Real describe it, "we are

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beguiled enough by machine productivity to reconstruct almost unconsciously all our social institutions on this model" (Christians and Real, 1979, p. 84). Technique, then, is the elevation of means over ends, the worship of mechanistic efficiency.

Ellul, coming from a staunchly Judeo-Christian world view, argues that such worship is all-encompassing. One cannot worship technique and God. Accordingly, for the technological society to move forward, all citizens must be consistently reminded of their allegiance to it. This is why such a large part of Ellul's oeuvre relates to the mass media. The media are essential components in the world of technique. As the technological world becomes somewhat cold and heartless it is necessary for its citizens to be reminded of their allegiance to it. As Ellul states it, "In the midst of increasing mechanization and technological organization, propaganda is simply the means used to prevent these things from being felt as too oppressive and to persuade man to submit with good grace"(Ellul, 1965, p. xviii). Such submission must be all inclusive. Ellul argues that "technique has taken over the whole of civilization"(Ellul, 1964, p. 128). Technique has crossed over all geographic boundaries and spreads thoroughly through the institutions of the nations that those boundaries represent. Soon, all social institutions of a modern society are oriented toward technique.

Recognizing both the Judeo-Christian orientation of Ellul and the Judeo-Christian elements of some facets of American society, however, the reader might question the outcome of clashes between the "religious" element of the technological world (the worship of efficiency and the technological state) and the "religious" elements imbedded in American culture (the theological component of western civilization as a whole and

American culture and civics particularly). There would seem to be a clash between the religion of the new world and the religion of the old world.

Postman addresses this issue by suggesting that the religion of the new world is fundamentally different from the religion of the old. By suggesting that Technopoly has made religion invisible he is not suggesting that it does not exist, rather, that it does not exist in its original form. Technopoly is successful in "redefining what we mean by religion"(Postman, 1992, p. 48).

Postman's shortcoming, however, is in suggesting that such a redefinition is a one time event which occurs in the technocratic world (which, as mentioned earlier is a how Postman defines the world of the 19th century). He maintains that in that era the traditional world clashed with the modern world and something had to give. The machinery of the modern world was already in place, but the minds of the people were not prepared for the massive assault of such machinery. The people were not ready because their minds had been formed in a traditional world, a world he calls "tool-using." Postman (1992, p. 46) claims these people bore the "troublesome residue of a tool-using period." His assertion is that such residue had to be removed, and it was. When we move to technopoly, an authoritarian form of technocracy, alternatives are eliminated.

Yet we must note that a culture cannot simply ignore a religion that has been a dominant cultural element for 2000 years, and total redefinition does not seem possible. To move to a specific example within the mass media, Postman would be correct in assessing that television programming in the 1990s usually shows little or no connection to established Christian religious belief. Yet there are times in the year when such connections are difficult to avoid. In December, to choose the most obvious manifestation, numerous television shows work a Christmas theme into their normal format. While Postman would argue that "Christmas" in these programs means something completely different from "Christmas" as a religious holiday (or holy day), this manifestation still stands as evidence that technopoly has natural barriers in its path to cultural monopolization.

The point is that "residue" still remains, even in a technopolistic world. Such residue must be dealt with. Ellul suggests this much in his most media-oriented work Propaganda. The reader must be aware that Ellul visualizes propaganda not as a specific, biased, communication phenomenon, but as an integral system of modern communication. As Real explains it, "Ellul redefines it (propaganda) as a universal condition which pervades all individual lives in industrially advanced societies"(Real, 1981, p. 110). Basically, technique becomes the determining factor in the flow of information. In this environment, preexisting ideologies cannot be ignored altogether. Ellul claims that there will be times in the technological society when certain ideologies command belief among the masses and might be an obstacle to the goals of the technological state (Ellul, 1962, p. 197). Such ideologies might even provide the citizen with "criteria for judgment," a phenomenon that would likely defeat efficiency. As Ellul sees it,

> In this case the propagandist must be careful not to run head-on into a prevailing ideology; all he can do is integrate it into his system, use some parts of it, deflect it, and so on. Secondly, he must ask himself whether the ideology, such as it is, can be used for his propaganda; whether it has psychologically predisposed an individual to submit to propaganda's impulsions. (p.198)

For Ellul, then, cultural residues are not eliminated in the technological society, but must be dealt with within the broader realm of propaganda. The mass media must occasionally adopt these residues and adapt them to their purposes.

Dialogic Analysis

Ellul is one of many modern scholars who have shown interest in the way the media deal with conflicting ideologies. Dialogism is a popular method of media analysis that examines that issue. Originally borrowed from the work of Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin (1981), dialogic analysis attempts to understand how "meaning is constructed socially through the interaction of a variety of languages that emanate from a given text" (Parry-Giles & Traudt, 1989, p. 147). Bakhtin's vision of the novel insisted on an "interplay of dialogues" within a given social system (Hoy, 1992, p. 765). He used the term heteroglossia to refer to the multi-vocal characteristic of the medium.

Horace Newcomb (1984) was instrumental in introducing dialogism to mass media scholars. Working with Bakhtin's original ideas, Newcomb claimed that television critics can study the utterances of characters within a program. Clearly, in any such product, there will be a variety of speakers. Just as a novel, it is considered dialogic because it is "shot through with many coinciding voices" (Shevtsova, 1992, p. 753). Each of these voices represents something. For example, in the world of television drama "each character responds to the central ideologies from a different perspective" (Newcomb, 1984, p. 41). In doing so, the characters create what Newcomb calls "character zones." These character zones overlap and conflict, revealing much about the program as a whole. As Parry-Giles and Traudt (1991, p. 147) point out, one goal of dialogic analysis is to "discover how the utterance mixes and is changed by its conflict with other utterances."

Newcomb proposed that by examining these character zones and their interaction within the television program one could understand the hegemonic intention of the script. That is, one could determine the ideological orientation of the text as a whole.

Such a task is important from an Ellulian perspective. After all, our perception of characters in many ways has an impact on our perception of ourselves and our own world view. Ellul relates this closely to the role of propaganda.

> From then on, the individual in the clutches of such sociological propaganda believes that those who live this way are on the side of the angels, and those who don't are bad; those who have this conception of society are right, and those who have another conception are in error. (Ellul, 1962, p. 65).

Which characters are confirmed and which are not thus becomes an important element in textual analysis. Beyond examining specific statements in a text, we must look at the conflict and resolution involving those statements. Ellul claims this is especially true of television as a medium, because of its tendency toward process rather than product. Viewers enter into the dialogue in such a way that "the possibility of reacting and criticizing is accordingly reduced" (Ellul, 1981, p. 360). Most television viewers, then, are unaware of these ideological dimensions of the text. The critics job is to help them become aware.

Picket Fences

Picket Fences is a dramatic series produced by David E. Kelley Productions for CBS. It began its run in 1992 and is still on the air. The drama has earned a loyal audience and a good deal of critical praise, including a number of Emmy awards. Moreover, it is arguable that the cultural residue of religion is more noticeable in Picket

Fences than in most other network dramas. Several critics have noted the show's tendency to contain religious themes. Producer Kelley once stated "If we're different from other shows, it isn't that we've accented religion, but we have not pretended that it's not there" (Broadway, 1994). Such a comment calls to mind Postman's point that in technopoly, many television shows *do* pretend religion is not there.

The episode of Picket Fences examined here begins with scenes of a Christmas caroling event in the town of Rome, Wisconsin, the normal setting for the weekly drama. As carolers sing "Away in a Manger," the image cuts to a tight close-up of a spherical, white object moving through the December sky. As a whooshing sound effect changes to a thud, we see what turns out to be a snowball as it hits the head of a statue of Christ. Immediately, the local priest, Father Barrett, confronts the perpetrator, commenting that he saw the act. In a semi-serious tone, the priest tells Matthew Brock that the young lad might end up in a place "where there are no snowballs." The boy's mother, Jill Brock, happens to be a respected doctor in the small community, and asks Matthew, her oldest son, if he will behave and listen to the carols.

As the caroling scene continues, the director begins crosscutting to another location. Jimmy Brock, husband of Jill and the town sheriff, is busy pulling a car from an icy body of water. The crosscutting continues until the carolers finish their song and Jimmy Brock and his crew fail in their attempt to revive a young woman they have pulled out of the car. Jill Brock listens to the final words the carolers utter, manifesting a rather confused expression of contentment and concern. The scene fades to black and the title sequence rolls.

Presumed to be dead, the young woman is examined by the local coroner. As he holds a scalpel over her chest, he is surprised by a swift movement of her hand which prevents his intended investigation. She is swiftly taken to the hospital. The revival of Dana Marshall (to a comatose state) causes a stir in the small town, but that is just the start of the stirring. In speaking with the coroner, Jill Brock adds a new twist to the plot. Her examination has determined that Dana is four months pregnant. The coroner objects. He did a thorough examination in what was supposed to be an autopsy and found the young woman to be a virgin.

At this point a brief subplot is introduced. Snowball hurler Matthew Brock is in the process of telling his younger brother Zachary that there is no Santa Claus. He explains all the gory details. Parents sneak presents into the house, pilfer letters to Mr. Claus, and run other forms of interference. Christmas for Zack is not going to be what it used to be.

But it is Christmas nonetheless, and the people of the town are very quick to make a connection between Dana Marshall and the virgin birth of Jesus. Even the town clergy enter the discussion, though they are aware of two negative possibilities. One is that there is a legitimate connection to the original virgin birth, which might cause quite a commotion. The other possibility is that this is a hoax. Not wanting to appear foolish, the clergy try to keep things quiet until they can decide a course of action.

Joining the clergy in their agnosticism is Jill Brock. She explains to Jimmy that her textbooks cannot possibly explain what she has seen. Maybe, it is a miracle. She's willing to consider that. On her flanks are two people with stronger opinions. The coroner, Carter Pike, is immediately suspicious and begins searching for purely scientific explanations (his first is that Dana, who is known to be a devout Catholic, is suffering religious delusions of being the virgin Mary and impregnated herself with a long, thin, straw). Dana's gynecologist, Dr. Haber, objects. He is a religious man and takes offense at Pike's claim that religious people are prone to schizophrenia. He later reveals his strong belief in the possibility of a miraculous cause.

Jill faces pressures from both directions. As a doctor she wants to adhere to the scientific view. As a member of a society with deep religious traditions, she does not want to discount the possibility of a miracle. Her discomfort is increased when the next major plot twist occurs. Dana Marshall starts experiencing medical complications as a result of the baby. Jill explains to Dana's father that there is little chance his daughter will survive if the pregnancy continues. And, there is no chance the baby will survive if Dana does not. The father recommends that Jill terminate the pregnancy. Since Dana cannot make a decision on her own, however, Jill must ask the local judge to decide the matter. Flamboyant local attorney Douglas Wambaugh takes the case to the judge. At this point the clergy step forward to request an injunction against the abortion. Still claiming agnosticism in regards to the deity of the unborn baby, they feel they must prevent its demise and they ask smooth-talking attorney Franklin Dell to plead their case. The judge agrees to a hearing on the issue.

Meanwhile, Zack continues to wrestle with the existence of Santa Claus. He goes to a local department store and purposefully visits the phony Saint Nick twice in a successful attempt to verify the fraud. Later, his parents try to reinstate their child's belief in the holiday persona. But, in doing so, they recognize that he is just as confused about the existence of God as he is the existence of Santa Claus. Older brother Matthew (who *knows* there is no Santa) manifests a greater interest in the former, asking his older sister about the biblical account of the virgin birth. Jill, who is eavesdropping on their conversation, is flabbergasted by Kimberly's inability to explain the event to her younger brother.

She has little time to worry about this, however, as the pressing matter of the virgin mother progresses. When the hearing begins, Dr. Haber is brought to the stand and claims there is no medical explanation. On cross-examination, he claims that the fact that Dana was a virgin means the pregnancy must be supernatural. A quick edit to Jill Brock under examination by Wambaugh shows the difference between her and Dr. Haber. She does not see it as supernatural. But, the assertive Franklin Dell confronts her on this issue, asking her if she believes Mary experienced a virgin birth. Jill lowers her eyes and answers yes.

Wambaugh confronts Doctors Brock and Haber outside the courtroom, claiming both neglected their medical duties to their patient Dana Matthews. Brock briefly claims that she merely told the truth. Haber, however, responds very defensively, claiming he is tired of having his religion trod upon. He then turns to Brock and denounces her, claiming that she was ashamed of her faith.

Here is where the major conflict of the show comes through. In Dana Marshall's hospital room, Jill Brock discusses the confrontation with her husband. "Do we really believe in God?", she asks. He briefly reassures her with an "Of course!" answer. But this doesn't satisfy Jill. She recognizes that they "dance around religion." They never confront it. Jimmy explains that he is sure of the presence of his belief, but not its nature. Given his uncertainty about some biblical tales, he finds it easiest to keep his distance from God, knowing he is out there, but "not getting in the same room with him." Jill, stares at Dana, a patient for whom she can do nothing, and seems to wonder whether it might not be better to have God in the same room with her. She presumes that without a miracle it will be necessary to either abort the baby or watch mother and child slowly die.

The judge seems in the same predicament as Jill is. After a brief scene in which he visits a church to pray, he is seen in his courtroom listening to closing arguments. It is time for him to decide. Just as the judge is about to read his decision, however, deputies burst into the courtroom telling him his judgment is moot. Dana Marshall has come out of her coma and can now speak for herself. People hasten to the hospital. One of the first to arrive is Dr. Haber who insists that he should care for the woman. As he approaches her, though, he is quickly arrested. DNA tests have shown that he is the father of the child (having artificially inseminated her with a syringe). The story that Dana had come out of her coma was a ploy. Authorities used it in hopes that Haber would move in such a way that would prove his guilt. Sure enough, a quick search reveals a hypodermic presumed to contain nitroglycerin (which would induce cardiac arrest in his patient and prevent her from informing). Jill asks Haber why he would do such a thing. He claims that his actions allowed people all over the world to regain hope. Even Jill, he claims, received that hope.

Having his key reason for a court case evaporate, the judge gives Dana's father the go ahead to terminate the pregnancy. A discussion with Jill Brock reveals that Mr. Marshall has never been certain about the rightness of such a move. Jill explains that it is unlikely Dana will ever regain consciousness and tries to convince him to let the pneumonia run its course. As they speak, Dana suddenly cries out, coming out of her coma. Her father exults in the occurrence, and Jill immediately calls in the technicians and their equipment. When she has a moment to stop and think, she speaks to Jimmy, explaining that such sudden changes are rare, but they do happen. She does not use the word miracle.

As the show concludes, the Brock family huddles together near the fireplace of their small-town American home. They all listen attentively as Jimmy reads a passage about the existence of Santa Claus. He warmly announces "Thank God, he lives. He lives forever. A thousand years from now, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood." When the reading is completed, Zachary states "I like that ending." Jimmy and Jill respond in agreement.

The Dialogic Nature of "Cross Examination"

The opening shots of this episode forewarn the viewer about the acerbic nature of the dialogue within. Certainly a snowball striking an icon of Christ is dramatic enough to make the viewer realize this is no mild mannered Christmas special. More than this though, the opening sequence as a whole shows dialogue. One world is the old world of town squares with manger scenes and citizens gathered in a tradition. The other world is a high technology world with sounds of sirens, wenches, medical equipment and the screaming voices of people experiencing the pains of anomie. In one venue, carolers and their audience use candles to light their way through a centripetal community event. In the other, scuba divers and EMTs use electronic search lights in investigating a centrifugal event. The two scenes focus on two different sets of technology, and Postman argues that different technologies produce different thought worlds.

The focus of this show is the collision of those thought worlds. Jill Brock is in the path of the collision. She has struggled with spiritual issues in other episodes. In this one the struggle is a major plot element. Being placed between people who seem much more certain of their orientation toward religion, Brock is perplexed. She is presented with utterances from several key characters which lead her to question her own world view. This element is a crucial part of dialogue of the show. Through the juxtaposition of Zachary's questions about Santa Claus and Jill's questions about her faith in God, we get a sense of her discomfort. She tells herself that she has always believed in God, but increasingly lives in a world that operates as if he does not exist. Or, perhaps it is a world that talks like he does but behaves as if he does not. Zachary is the same way with Saint Nick. The juxtapositions mentioned above are far from subtle.

A more subtle juxtaposition in the episode is the one between key characters who represent varying points on a religious-technopolistic spectrum. These other characters represent dialectical alternatives more than Zachary does. The young boy is in many ways a reflection of Jill, not an alternative. The strongest alternatives in this episode are Dr. Haber and Carter Pike. These two stand as alternative world views Jill could consider. In Newcomb's terminology, they offer us clear character zones.

Haber, offers one extreme. He is confident of his faith and seems willing to let it have an impact on his everyday life. His utterance suggests that God should play a major role in human affairs. This is demonstrated clearly in the closing arguments in the courtroom. Franklin Dell, the lawyer for the church states it succinctly.

> What has happened in this country that has made us so ashamed of believing in God? Politicians are schooled never to bring it up. Try saying a prayer in school and its "Quick, call the ACLU!. Oh no, it's all right to be religious. But for God's sake, keep it to yourself. Whatever you do, don't tell anybody. You'll be labeled a

> zealot, a ranting demagogue, an idiot. I'll tell you, judge, this country is in moral decay. Maybe it's time we stopped punishing people for bringing their religious and moral concerns into our public arenas.

This basically reiterates the point Haber makes outside the courtroom when confronted by Wambaugh. In that utterance, Haber sounds as if he is pronouncing a creed. Basically, he disregards the advice of those Attorney Dell speaks of when he says "Whatever you do, don't tell anybody." Haber tells Wambaugh very succinctly what he believes. Jill watches him as he does.

We watch him also, wondering about the viability of this world view alternative. And, at this point in the show Haber is presented as a reasonable alternative. Peter Michael Goetz, who plays the role, is well groomed and portrays the character as amiable and conversant. He is presented as a physician and thus a scientists who claims he sometimes has difficulty understanding the world when trying to do so from both scientific and religious perspectives. It is also clear that when the scientific perspective does not answer a question, he quickly turns to religion for the answer. Jill seems to have some affinity for him and even admits that he was correct when he pointed out that she was ashamed of her faith.

Yet Haber's world view is eventually discounted by the script. The point this episode tries to make is that he really is a zealot, a ranting demagogue, an idiot. In fact, the director of the show foreshadows the dismissal of the character in the courtroom scene. As Franklin Dell gave his speech on the need for religious conviction, the director occasionally cut to members of the audience. When Dell spoke of zealots, demagogues, and idiots, the camera cut to Haber.

The discounting of Haber's world view is not without cost. This character claimed to have hope, and he was trying to spread that hope. That is how he defends his actions as he is hauled off to jail. His view of God is one in which God intervenes in human affairs (and, apparently humans must sometimes take part in that intervention). The clergy in the episode are mandated to take this view and seem aware of that mandate. Yet they are fearful and distance themselves from the whole affair as much as possible.

When Haber is whisked away, his utterance goes with him. The audience is no longer led to perceive his ideology as a reasonable one. The next scene is in the judge's chambers, where Carter Pike takes over the dialogue. His utterance is dominant. He doubted the miraculous all along and proclaims he was proven correct in his belief that everything was to be explained by modern science and technology. When speaking of Haber and his crime, Pike states "This is the exact bipolar disorder I've been describing. I thought it was her; It turns out is was him." For Pike, the world is to be organized by science and rationality. His aversion to theological world views is revealed outside the courtroom, just as Haber's was. When Wambaugh and Sheriff Brock have nearly given up on finding a scientific explanation for the events, Pike does not. He states. "If that judge finds this could be divine, we look like fools. We can't give up." Any explanation beyond the natural, is unacceptable within this character zone.

Pike's utterance, then, is a stark contrast to Haber's. It rules out the possibility of the miraculous altogether. Though the technological society finds this cold rationality appealing, it is not without its problems. In this case, Jill and her specialists sit next to Dana Marshall's bed, knowing everything they can possibly know about her illness and still feeling helpless. Once Pike determines that the pregnancy is not miraculous, he is content. Yet Jill is not. For her, the pain of watching an innocent young girl and her unborn child suffer is valid reason to question the detached logic of a mechanistic world. At one point in the script she seems to realize that there are times when the only thing she can do is pray. Yet such prayer would deny the utterance of Carter Pike, a technological utterance devoid of spirituality.

Such denial comes in the next scene. Dana's father has consistently been portrayed as a devoutly religious man. Yet near the end of the script he has been swayed by the technological utterance. He looks at his daughter hooked up to the latest medical equipment and seems to have been convinced by the evidence Carter Pike presented. This puts him in contrast with Haber, who was the man of hope. This contrast is starkly demonstrated when in the first line of his final scene Mr. Marshall asks "There's no real hope, is there?" Jill, confirms the position with a simple "no." Haber's utterance (most recently presented in the scene preceding this one) held hope but was dismissed. Pike's general orientation is presented as logical, but is presented as hopeless and therefore not desirable. Nobody wants to live in a world without hope. And if the world is simply a mechanistic system in which humans are mere flotsam, where is the hope?

But Jill and Mr. Marshall are not left to reside in this world. When the miraculous recovery occurs with two minutes left in the story, they are given one more opportunity for hope. Though they have discounted the possibility of seeing God as personal and close, they do not want him too far away. If he chooses to work a miracle or two, all the better. Jill, in the end, seems to embrace her husband's brand of religion. In fact, as Dana is wheeled out of her room, Jill speaks to Jimmy (and herself) about what she just saw. Her comment is "It's rare, but it has happened."

That this leaves the Brock family in a certain ideological state is demonstrated in the scene that immediately follows, the family sharing in the reading of a story about Santa. Just as Zachary has been convinced that a certain form of belief in Santa is a good thing, Jill has been convinced that a certain form of belief in God is a good thing. What "Cross Examination" seems to be communicating in the end is a need for a world of Jimmy Brock spirituality. David Kelley cannot envision living in a cosmos where there is no God. Neither can he envision living in a cosmos where God gets too close to him. The best option in his mind is a world where God exists but has little impact on how we live our lives.

There are other ways in which this image is implanted in the script. In the extremely important final arguments in the courtroom case, for example, the two judges are made to play the two different world views. Douglas Wambaugh tells Judge Bone that it is time to discount the theological element. In his own words "She doesn't need a God right now. She needs a judge." Franklin Dell rebuts, and ends his plea by asking the judge to "let God be God." The point of the show is that if we take the second route we lose control over the definition and nature of God. In such cases, letting God be God might be painful because God might chose to be a judge. In such a case, we get a God and a judge.

This message is not only demonstrated in the script, but also with the title of the episode. Cross examination in this episode has less to do with the courtroom maneuverings than it does the theological elements of the show. After all, the title is not "Cross-examination" (which would be almost meaningless since most of the show's episodes contain a courtroom scene). The title is "Cross Examination." For Jimmy Brock, Christian belief in general poses no problems. He states that much when speaking to Jill.

Yet specific elements of belief are stumbling blocks for him. The biggest stumbling block might not be the birth of Christ, but the cross of Christ. A person can easily bear with a story of a virgin birth 2000 years ago. It is very easy to conceptualize the story in such a way that it has no direct impact on our lives. The crucifixion, however, calls into question deeper theological issues of human sin and the need for propitiation. For someone like Jimmy Brock, the cross is an offense.

In this light, the first and the last scenes in the episode make perfect bookends and help us make sense of the hegemony of intention. The Brock children's actions in the very first scene are part of the battle between mother and father. Matthew's errant snowball didn't collide with the icon of the baby Jesus in a manger. It collided with the icon of the adult Jesus on the cross. A close look at the brief shot shows a bearded Jesus with his thorn-crowned head sagging. The presence of such an image might be unacceptable for a person (such as Jimmy) who wants to keep God at a distance. Though Jill was present at the religious event with the children--hoping to enjoy the moment--Jimmy was absent. In the children, the wishes of both parents are manifest. They are present, but they are fighting certain elements of it.

By the end of the episode we discover that this show is about striking a balance. This balance is between a religious faith that invites God to interact with us on a daily basis, and an atheism that says there is no God. The show seems to suggest that something in the middle of these two extremes is comfortable. In the first scene, there are too many images that allow God to get close. For example, the words of the Christmas carol "Away in a Manger" refer not only to the birth of Christ, but the lordship of Christ. Moreover, as noted earlier, the statue of the crucified Jesus brings Christian soteriology into the dialogue in a way that the baby Jesus might not. The less offensive the symbol, the closer it is to the middle position to which this episode points.

This is manifest in the final scene, a scene God and Christmas have been sterilized. As the Brocks gather around the family fire, there are no strongly religious visual images in the room. Rather than carolers singing "Away in a Manger," a canned, instrumental version of "Silent Night" plays. Basically, the words have (or in Christian theology, the Word has) been removed from the message. This is not an uncommon occurrence in the media of the technological world. Ellul suggests that a contradictory cultural element must be dealt with. One option is to "obliterate it or disguise it". Another is to "interpret it in such a way that we can fit it without harm into an understanding that has an answer for everything"(Ellul, 1989, p. 33). Both of those tactics seem present here. The Brocks are presented as being very comfortable with this view of God and religion. Their "yeah" responses to Zack's affirmation to the message on the eternal nature of Santa Claus is really an "amen," the acceptance of the creed of their religion.

In Postman and Ellul's views of the technological world, this is what one might expect. Granted, the former seems to misjudge the persistent lingering of the residue of earlier cultures his analysis. Religion is still a factor to be dealt with. But Postman does seem correct in suggesting that religion is assaulted by technopoly. He would probably agree with Franklin Dell who claims "This country not only trivializes religion today. It scorns it." Postman's more accurate judgment is on the meaning of cultural elements and how they can shift. In this instance one can clearly see that the religion the Brocks cling to at the end of the program is very different from the religion which is discussed through much of the episode. Given our dialogic analysis, the implication is that the audience should sympathize with such a shift.

Such sympathy is part of the weltanshauung of the technological world. Ellul suggests that audience affinity for certain characters is a predictable element of the entire communicative phenomenon. Much of his work deals with conformity in the modern world.

> To act in conformity with collective beliefs provides security and a guarantee that one acts properly. Propaganda reveals this consonance to the individual, renders the collective belief perceptible, conscious, and personal for him. It gives him a good conscience by making him aware of the collectivity of beliefs. (Ellul, 1965, p. 200)

This "good conscience" is not proper in some metaphysical sense, only in a cultural sense. What Ellul is suggesting is that this is one more example of our tendency to fall into place in the technological world. He would argue that in a technological world where efficiency and standardization are the driving forces, a religious view such as the Brocks' does not pose problems. Other views might. When he steps out of his role as a litigator and openly questions the implications of the court case in which he is involved, Franklin Dell recognizes that not all forms of religion are equally beneficent. He reminds the pastor and the priest that if the baby is the son of God, the current political and social systems might not fare well. In his own words, "We'd have to deny him. Otherwise the world order would crumble." Though readers might not necessarily agree with all of Ellul's theological arguments, they must admit (as Dell does in his moment of honest reflection) that some forms of religious belief are more problematic for the modern technopolistic state than others. If they are problematic, one would expect the media to question, if not denigrate them. Such is what appears to happen here. Though this is only one reading of one episode of one show, the analysis suggests that mass media depiction of religion is a worthy area for further investigation.

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NEWS VALUES, NEWS STRATEGIES:
THE NEW YORK TIMES IN HAITI, 1994-96

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On October 11, 1992, more than 2,000 people gathered in protest outside the New York Times building in Manhattan. The object of their protest: Times coverage of Haiti, in particular the reporting of Caribbean correspondent Howard French.

The protesters charged that Times' coverage following the September 30, 1991 coup that overthrew Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide was weighted heavily against Aristide. Howard French, they said, was an instrument of a U.S. foreign policy determined to keep the progressive president in exile as long as possible. His reports from Haiti relied heavily on sources connected to Haiti's military regime and the wealthy elite who opposed Aristide. And, they said, French ignored sources with ties to the much larger pro-Aristide rural majority. Aristide himself, the protesters pointed out, had not been interviewed by French since the coup.

Times editor Max Frankel defended French in a letter to the protesting groups. Two weeks later, however, Aristide was given space on the Times op-ed page and, soon after, French published an interview with Aristide (Orenstein, 1993a; 1993b; Chomsky, 1993).

In the months and years after the coup, as Aristide's exile in the United States dragged on, his supporters continued to find fault with French's coverage of Haiti. They charged that French, following Washington's lead, treated with deference the military coup leaders. Moreover, they said, he and the Times contributed to a smear campaign against Aristide, giving prominent coverage to allegations that Aristide had been an egotistical, perhaps unbalanced leader who encouraged violence and vengeance among his supporters (Hess, 1994).

In July 1994, perhaps in response to the critical pressure or simply as part of a regular rotation, Larry Rohter, the Times Miami bureau chief, assumed the position of Caribbean correspondent, offering a fresh start to Times coverage of Haiti. It was a critical time: The Clinton administration struggled with how to restore the democratically-elected president while also appeasing U.S. and international business interests; a U.S. invasion was called off at the last moment; U.S. peace-keeping forces eventually landed in Haiti; Aristide returned to power, and after he served out his term, the Haitian people elected a new president. In the midst of such crucial changes and in the context of the Times' previous coverage, Rohter's reporting merited close scrutiny. This paper offers such scrutiny.

It's unusual, but not rare, for individual correspondents to attract such critical attention. Traditionally, criticism has been most intense when reporters vary too much from U.S. foreign policy lines. Recent examples include the controversy over Ray Bonner's reporting from El Salvador for the Times and the heated debate over Peter Arnett's Gulf War reporting from Baghdad for CNN. Times reporters in particular attract scrutiny due to the paper's status among national and international officials as well as its agenda-setting influence on other media (Berry, 1990). The questions here: How did Rohter report on the changes unfolding in Haiti and to what extent did his reporting confirm or confront U.S. foreign policy dictates? They are questions of increasing relevance in a post-Cold War world.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS VALUES

The scrutiny of Times coverage of Haiti took place in the context of a larger debate on international news values, a subject of much concern in the post-Cold War era (Galtung and Vincent, 1992; Gaunt, 1990; O'Heffernan, 1991). Numerous commentators have noted that the press has long covered international affairs from the perspective of America's interests (Altschull, 1995; Hoge, 1993). The Cold War of course offered the premier model for such coverage, providing basic, enduring, organizing principles for selecting and reporting international events. Those organizing principles are now obsolete. As Hallin (1987, p. 23) writes: "The Cold War perspective, which once organized virtually all foreign affairs coverage into an ideological picture supportive of American world hegemony, now no longer does so."

Without the ideological guidance of the Cold War perspective, journalists operate now in a vacuum of values. The editor of Foreign Affairs, James F. Hoge (1993, p. 1), states, "With the old gauges broken, the press is struggling to understand the new international order of risks and opportunities." Vanden Heuvel (1993, p. 12) makes a similar observation. The media, he notes, "are still struggling to develop a satisfactory new approach to reporting the world." He continues:

> The end of the Cold War has opened new horizons for the American media, but embedded in that wider perspective is

> the problem of making sense of a world in which change is the only constant. The old criteria for covering foreign affairs on the East-West confrontation model -- and many of the old standards of newsworthiness -- don't apply in a post-Cold War model (p. 19).

No dominant framework -- or metanarrative (Hallin, 1987) -- stands ready to replace the organizing and authorizing powers of the Cold War model. In this rudderless context, some journalists and academics have proposed alternate frameworks for how U.S. news media might cover the world.

For some theorists, the press stands at an unusual crossroads, rich with opportunity. With U.S. foreign policy purposeless and with U.S. correspondents forced into reflection about their world role, some scholars see the opportunity for a journalism of global justice. They see the chance for a humane journalism that gives overdue attention to the suffering of people who fell unnoted outside the media's former Cold War framework (Galtung and Vincent, 1992; Traber 1993). Christians, Ferre and Fackler (1993) argue the time is right for a press "nurtured by communitarian ethics" and affirm, "Under the notion that justice itself -- and not merely haphazard public enlightenment -- is a telos of the press, the news-media system stands under obligation to tell the stories that justice requires" (p. 93).

Some observers have suggested that such a change in values is already underway, that television coverage of international disaster and tragedy -- "the CNN effect" -- is driving U.S. foreign policy. "Policy seems to follow the media spotlight," Vanden Heuvel

(1993, p. 12) writes, citing U.S. actions in Somalia and Bosnia as examples. Hoge (1993, p. 6) says, "Foreign policy-makers speak as if they are bedeviled by the nature of post-Cold War press coverage, often alleging that it is television film footage that dominates agenda-setting."

Other theorists argue however that the dissolution of the Cold War model has rendered the press even more vulnerable to U.S. foreign policy dictates (Altschull, 1995; Hallin, 1987, 1994). Unwilling to articulate national interests and unable to find a coherent frame of reference for organizing costly foreign coverage, the press increasingly focuses its attention on domestic matters, these scholars argue, venturing off-shore only for the most dramatic disasters or when U.S. foreign policy is already directly in play. News images of the struggle against communism will be replaced, Hallin (1987) fears, by dizzying, unstructured images of a world in conflict, images of disorder, images ultimately of anarchy and chaos, resulting in an overarching "image of 'Fortress America,' an island of civilization in a sea of political barbarism" (p. 21).

The theorizing over the direction of news values is no ethereal, academic debate. Indeed, The New York Times has directly acknowledged the controversy and confusion raised by the removal of the Cold War framework. In an internal memo since published, then foreign editor Bernard Gwertzman (1993) confronted the need for different values. He began:

> To the foreign staff: I thought it might be useful to share some ideas on where we are and where we should be going in

> our foreign coverage in the post-Cold War environment. What has spurred this memo, of course, is the breakup of the Soviet Union and Gorbachev's resignation at Christmas 1991, which followed so closely upon the collapse of the communist system in Eastern Europe two years earlier. Not only have these developments drastically altered the world's political map, but they have had an inevitable impact on how we as reporters and editors do our jobs (p. 33).

Gwertzman acknowledged the "remarkable" previous influence of U.S. foreign policy and the nuclear superpower rivalry on reporting. "This competition consciously and subconsciously dominated government policies, affecting newspaper coverage as well," he said. "Without this threat of nuclear destruction, there is an obvious need to question some of our assumptions about coverage" (p. 34). While unable or unwilling to offer specific directives on news values, Gwertzman made it clear that new thinking was in order.

> We are all professionals and it makes little sense in trying to define for a reporter what is news and what isn't. But it is certainly true that we have widened our net considerably on what we want to cover and some of the traditional political stories of the past may not resonate as they did before (pp. 37-38).

In these twinned contexts then of particular controvery over Haitian coverage and a broader confusion over international news values, Larry Rohter took on his position as Caribbean correspondent for the Times. The purpose of this paper is to examine Rohter's reporting from Haiti, placing that reporting within the especial concerns over Times Haitian coverage and, more widely, the global concerns over post-Cold War news values.

Specifically, the paper first offers Burke's sociological criticism -- with its in-depth treatment of text strategies -- as an appropriate method for consideration of news values. After brief context on recent U.S.-Haitian relations as well as background on Rohter, the paper takes up an analysis of Rohter's correspondence from Haiti. The period examined is July 1, 1994, the beginning of Rohter's correspondence, to February 29, 1996, the month of the Haitian elections. The study concludes by placing the reporting within the larger context of international news values and the struggle over news strategies in a post-Cold War era.

STRATEGIES FOR SITUATIONS

For analyses of texts and values, the work of the literary and social critic Kenneth Burke is particularly appropriate. In a number of works, Burke pursued an encompassing "sociological criticism" that attempted to construct a grammar of motives and values (1969; 1973, pp. 293-304; also, 1-137; 1984, pp. 5-36). In by-now familiar terms, Burke argued that critical and imaginative works could be studied as "strategies for dealing with situations" (1973, p. 296). "These strategies," he said (1973, p. 1), "size up the situations, name their structure and outstanding ingredients, and name them in a way that contains an attitude towards them."

Strategies were of interest to Burke because they offered entry into motives and values. Strategies placed the critical focus on what a text was designed to do. Burke's method was straightforward. Analyzing an individual poem, for example, the critic "assumes that the poem is designed to 'do something' for the poet and his readers, and that we can make the most relevant observations about its design by considering the poem as the embodiment of this act" (1973, p. 89). The approach "assumes that a poem's structure is to be described most accurately by thinking always of the poem's function" (p. 89).

Burke's approach then proceeded beyond the individual work and sought to organize strategies among works. The works were organized in response to the critic's project; they could be the works of an individual writer, a literary school, a publication, an era. "I am simply proposing, in the social sphere, a method of classification with reference to strategies," he says (1973, p. 303). The critic assembles and codifies his lore, in "classifications, groupings, made on the basis of some strategic element common to the group" (p. 302). The following paragraph contains some of Burke's most evocative words:

> What would such sociological categories be like? They would consider works of art, I think, as strategies for selecting enemies and allies, for socializing losses, for warding off evil eye, for purification, propitiation, and desanctification, consolation and vengeance, admonition and exhortation, implicit commands or instructions of one sort or another. Art forms like "tragedy" or "comedy" or "satire" would be treated as equipments for living, that size up situations in various ways and in keeping with correspondingly various attitudes (p. 304).

The goal of Burke's project was to find a word for what already has been said. Or as Geertz said in another context (1973, p. 27), the goal was to "uncover the conceptual structures that inform our subjects' acts, the 'said' of social discourse."

It needs to be stressed that the concept of strategy applied here is broader than the notion of one reporter's conscious intentions or motivations. Press reports are complex texts, influenced by sources, editorial policy, news canon, narrative conventions, and other forces. In Interpretation Theory, the philosopher Paul Ricoeur (1976) captures the spirit of Burke's strategies. Ricoeur writes:

> What is indeed to be understood -- and consequently appropriated -- in a text? Not the intention of the author, which is supposed to be hidden behind the text; not the historical situation common to the author and his original readers. . . . What has to be appropriated is the meaning of the text itself, conceived in a dynamic way as the direction of thought opened up by the text (p. 92).

From this perspective then, the study analyzes and categorizes Larry Rohter's stories from Haiti, organizing the discussion around strategic elements common to the group. Each report was designed to do something for Times readers, in Burke's words, and the analysis takes up each report on those terms. Then, by assembling the strategies underlying the entire correspondence, the study hopes to provide a basis for examining that correspondence in the context of news values.

To ground this analysis, the paper first offers brief background on recent relations between Haiti and the United States. U.S. actions in Haiti during the 1990s have been confusing, convoluted and otherwise hard to follow. A brief summary might prove useful before an analysis of reporting is undertaken.

'THE USES OF HAITI': THE 1990s[1]

In 1986, after the Duvalier family dictatorship had devastated Haiti for three decades, demonstrations and dissent finally succeeded in deposing Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier. Many Haitians sought a period of dechoukaj -- an uprooting -- of the dictatorial past from their politics and culture. But a military junta, led by General Henri Namphy who had the support of the United States, held power.

Popular resistance -- which came to be called lavalas, a kind of purifying flood or outpouring -- increased. It began to coalesce around a Catholic priest, the Rev. Jean-Bertrand Aristide who had returned to Haiti in 1985 after three years of graduate study in Montreal. Aristide combined liberation theology with a progressive social policy of land reform, just wages, and the end to military oppression. He attracted broad and intense support among the rural poor and urban youth.

For four years, Haiti endured political turmoil; hundreds of people were killed as the military attempted to suppress dissent. The elections of December 1990 marked a major turning point. Aristide, who had been expelled from his Salesian order, agreed to run for president against the U.S.-backed candidate Marc Bazin. Aristide swept to victory with almost 70 percent of the vote.

U.S. agencies watched the Aristide administration with alarm. Aristide's progressive politics had numerous repercussions for U.S. business interests. For example, Aristide proposed to raise the minimum daily wage to near $3, almost twice the going wage. The U.S. Agency for International Development, which had spent millions of U.S. tax dollars to promote U.S. business investments in Haiti's low-wage economy, saw Aristide as a disaster.

Haiti's wealthy elite, who still had huge resources, felt they had little to lose by trying to stop Aristide. On September 29, 1991, Aristide was overthrown by a military coup, financed by Haiti's upper class. Tales of U.S. complicity or at least support continue to be told. Aristide was flown to Caracas, Venezuela, and General Raoul Cedras took power.

The Bush administration offered little support to Aristide, despite the fact that he was a democratically elected president brought into office by a large majority. A weak embargo was put into place but the administration was more interested in restoring a constitutional democracy than in restoring Aristide.

With little U.S. pressure, the coup leaders began a campaign of extermination against Aristide's supporters. Bodies lay in the streets each morning and the death toll rose in the thousands. Aristide's supporters fled Haiti but the Bush administration, claiming that the refugees were not fleeing political persecution, instituted a policy of returning them forcibly to Haiti.

Haitian backers of the coup, along with sympathetic U.S. administrators, began a propaganda campaign against Aristide with materials that recently have been denounced as crude and false CIA disinformation (Naureckas, 1994). A file of Aristide's alleged human rights abuses was circulated to reporters and Congress. "Aristide's Autocratic Ways Ended Haiti's Embrace of Democracy," was the headline of one New York Times story by Howard French. Another rumor was circulated that Aristide was a manic-depressive.

During the 1992 presidential campaign, Bill Clinton made promises to change U.S. policies toward Haiti. Some promises were broken. Bowing to pressure from Florida officials who feared an influx of Haitians, Clinton said in January 1993 that he would maintain Bush's policy of returning refugees to Haiti.[2] Clinton did however work at restoring Aristide to power and in March 1993 Clinton met with Aristide.

Clinton found that Cedras was unwilling to relinquish power. Days after a much stiffer embargo was imposed in June 1993, Cedras came to Governors Island in New York and a tentative agreement was reached. Blanket amnesty would be granted to the military. And Aristide would be returned to power by October 30 in a process monitored by the United Nations.

Months of terror followed as military death squads lashed out at Aristide supporters. And in early October, Cedras reneged on the agreement. As the USS Harlan County attempted to dock in Port-au-Prince with the participating U.S. forces, it was met by heavily armed gangs. Unwilling to engage in a military battle, the Clinton administration backed off. Economic sanctions were reimposed and a new stalemate began.

Throughout 1994, the Clinton administration threatened military action against the coup leaders. The issue bitterly divided U.S. leftist politics between those who opposed any U.S. intervention in Haiti and those who wished to see the progressive Aristide restored to his rightful position (Regan, 1994; Landy, 1994).

On September 15, Clinton appeared on national television to announce an imminent invasion of Haiti. On September 17, as the invasion neared, a high-profile U.S. delegation made a final attempt at diplomacy with Cedras. The delegation included former president Jimmy Carter, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell and chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee Sam Nunn. Military planes were in the air, heading toward Haiti, when a deal was reached and the planes were recalled. Within weeks, some 16,000 U.S. troops landed unchallenged in Haiti. Aristide was returned to power.

For 16 months, Aristide served out the remainder of his term, ending the oppression by the military and introducing reforms in wages, work, health and justice. Forbidden by the constitution to succeed himself, he oversaw elections in June 1995. Rene Preval, Aristide's prime minister, was elected president and was inaugurated in February 1996.

LARRY ROHTER[3]

William Lawrence Rohter, known personally and professionally as Larry Rohter, was responsible for reporting the tumult and turmoil within Haiti for The New York Times. Appointed Times Caribbean correspondent in July 1994, Rohter had spent much of his life gaining experience in international affairs.

Born in Oak Park, Illinois, in 1950, Rohter studied political science in the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University and graduated in 1971. He immediately went on to the School of International Affairs and Institute of East Asian Studies at Columbia University where he received a masters in international affairs in 1973. He became fluent in Portuguese and Spanish and learned written and spoken Chinese. While studying at Columbia, Rohter worked for the New York bureau of Rede Globo, a Brazilian communication company, filing news and entertainment stories. Soon after graduation, he joined the Style section of The Washington Post, specializing in music from 1974 to 1979.

Rohter's work in international reporting began in 1980. He was hired by Newsweek as a correspondent in Rio de Janeiro. Then, after a brief stint as Latin American bureau chief, Rohter went to Asia as Peking bureau chief and then Asian regional editor.

In 1984, Rohter joined The New York Times as a metropolitan reporter. He toiled in New York and other U.S. bureaus for three years. In 1987, he seized another opportunity at foreign correspondence, becoming Mexico City bureau chief from 1987 to 1990. He came back to the states and in July 1991 took the position of Miami bureau chief, a position that entailed some Caribbean reporting. Three years later, in July 1994, he returned full-time to international reporting as Caribbean correspondent.

His first report appeared July 8. Its subject: Haitian refugees (1994, July 8, p. 6A). Panamanian President Guillermo Endara announced that he was withdrawing his offer to provide "safe haven" for 10,000 Haitians. And with that story, Rohter's reporting on Haiti began.

STRATEGIES FOR HAITIAN SITUATIONS

All of Rohter's correspondence from July 1, 1994 to February 29, 1996 was studied, a total of 196 stories. Rohter's Caribbean beat took him to Cuba, Panama, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Bahamas, Colombia, Trinidad, Honduras and El Salvador. Yet Haiti dominated Rohter's work. In July 1994, his first month on the beat, he filed only from Haiti. Through September, October and November of 1994, as Aristide reassumed power, Rohter again filed only from Haiti. Indeed, of Rohter's 196 stories, 120 were about Haiti. During periods of intense activity, such as the negotiations between the U.S. delegation and the military junta, and the subsequent landing of U.S. troops, Rohter was filing daily, at times penning two stories a day.

Following Burke, the study identified and analyzed strategies embedded in Rohter's correspondence. From the language of Rohter's reporting, the study isolated four categories, organized by dominant strategic elements common to the group. These strategies -- the delegitimation of the de facto government, the approbation and then disapprobation of Aristide, the avoidance of U.S.-FRAPH ties, and the degradation of Haitian life -- are examined in the following sections.

THE DELEGITIMATION OF THE 'DE FACTO' GOVERNMENT

A primary strategy in Rohter's early reporting, in the midst of Aristide's exile, was the delegitimation of the military junta. Rohter effected this strategy in four ways. He chronicled numerous killings and other acts of violence by the junta. He employed sources who denounced the group. He labeled the junta with terms of illegitimacy. And he reported, with almost satisfying detail, the humiliation of junta members as they were forced into exile.

The delegitimation of the de facto government was first accomplished through accounts of murders and beatings inflicted by its forces. For example, within hours after U.N. human rights monitors were expelled by the junta, the military increased its terror. Rohter highlighted the killings the next day and dismissed the junta's explanations. "Immediately after the rights observers were expelled, a dozen men whose identities remain unknown were killed and secretly buried," Rohter wrote (1994, July 17, sec. 1, p. 6). Government officials described "the victims" as car thieves, Rohter continued, "but the American Embassy isn't buying the story."

The same week, Rohter quoted an unnamed source that "the repression has become ferocious" (1994, July 20, p. 3A). The story was accompanied by a photograph of a Haitian policeman whipping people who were standing in line for free food. Soon after, another report led, "Government security forces shot and wounded a critic of military rule on Monday and beat and arrested several other people who were applying for refuge in the United States, witnesses and diplomats said today" (1994, August 3, p. 9A). Rohter's reports regularly included critical statements, such as "the military-dominated government has routinely ignored constitutional guarantees, sending soldiers, police and paramilitary groups, for example, to attack or kill political opponents, break up political meetings and search homes" (1994, August 2, p. 3A).

Rohter also accomplished the delegitimation of the government through his use of sources. As the junta defied U.S. attempts to restore Aristide to power, diplomats and embassy spokesemen served as ready sources to denounce the regime. For example, after the expulsion of the U.N. monitors, Rohter quoted Stanley Schrager, the American Embassy spokesman, who called the act "a not unanticipated display of empty bravado on the part of an illegitimate and illegal regime" (1994, August 2, p. 3A). Rohter began a "Week in Review" piece (1994, July 17, sec. 4, p. 2) by stating that the leaders were "Choosing once again to thumb their noses at the United States and its allies;" he immediately followed with a quote from U.N. envoy Dante Caputo who denounced the action as "a provocation" and a reaction from Clinton who said, "We've got to bring an end to this." As the United States prepared for an invasion, U.S. officials postured and threatened in Rohter's reporting. "'At this point, there is really nothing left to talk about,' one said. 'Either they go on their own or they are thrown out'" (1994, September 15, p. 8A).

The delegitimation of the government was also effected by Rohter's use of language. In particular, Rohter challenged the government on how it was to be named. On July 21, 1994, Rohter noted that "Last week, the Ministry of Information issued a communique ordering journalists to stop referring to Mr. Jonassaint and his Cabinet as a 'de facto' Government, insisting that it was a 'provisional and constitutional' Government." The order, Rohter noted, "has mostly been ignored" (1994, July 21, p. 10A). The next week Rohter began his report: "Haiti's de facto military government began today to organize elections" (1994, July 27, p. 3A). And in the weeks after the government communique, Rohter increased his use of the term "de facto government." Indeed, in just one report Rohter referred to the "de facto president," the "puppet civilian government," the "compliant rump parliament" and the "de facto government" (1994, August 2, p. 3A).

Rohter anticipated the U.S. invasion that would remove the military government. In a front-page story, Rohter began:

> Haitians are asking foreigners here, especially Americans, many variations on a single question, now that the United Nations has authorized an American-led invasion of this country and economic sanctions are at last fully in place: What are you waiting for? When are you coming? Why aren't you already here? (1994, August 10, p. 1A)

The departure of the junta, particularly the exile of Cedras, was depicted as a humiliation. Rohter said the departure was "under circumstances that can only be described as humiliating." He went on to describe the humiliation (1994, October 11, p. 1A). He first reported that U.S. embassy spokesman Stanley Schrager said Cedras' departure represented "the end of a sad chapter in the history of this nation." Then, Rohter said:

> Struggling to maintain his dignity in his farewell remarks, General Cedras made it clear that he did not share that opinion. Ignoring the deafening and often obscene chants of ordinary Haitians who had gathered beyond the

> American cordon, shouting that he was a murderer and casting aspersions on his ancestry, hygiene and sexual habits, he defended his three years at the head of the Haitian armed forces and warned of impending anarchy.

With such reporting, Rohter's work offered its first strategy -- the delegitimation of the military government. As Aristide took office, a second strategy emerged, one that developed and changed through the president's tenure.

THE APPROBATION AND DISAPPROBATION OF ARISTIDE

Rohter's reporting on Aristide had two distinct phases. In exile and immediately upon his return, Aristide was depicted in heroic terms as the wronged, legitimate ruler of Haiti, who would come back to save the devastated nation. Yet soon after his return, as Aristide resisted U.S. economic and security policies, Rohter's accounts began to question Aristide's judgment and approach.

The initial stage of approbation was accomplished through Rohter's portrayal of Aristide as a reasonable and conciliatory presence who would bring peace to Haiti. One of Rohter's early reports focused on a radio message that the exiled Aristide broadcast into Haiti. The lead emphasized that Aristide called for "reconciliation, justice and democracy" in his homeland and that he "forswore revenge against the soldiers who removed him from office" (1994, July 16, sec. 1, p. 4). Aristide was depicted in benign terms that even downplayed his possible threats to capitalism. "He also sought to calm businessmen who view him as a radical, saying that he respected the Haitian Constitution and the right to make a profit."

Soon after, Rohter filed a report that lauded the progressive wing of the Catholic Church, particularly the Lavalas movement that helped bring Aristide to power. The story painted the movement, seen by some U.S. officials as dangerously radical, in uplifting terms:

> The Rev. Jean-Bertrand Aristide was its most visible symbol and charismatic leader. In his absence, the progressive wing of Haiti's Roman Catholic Church, under constant assault by the state and largely shunned by its own church hierarchy, is fighting an uphill batttle to preach the same gospel of social justice and change he espoused.
>
> Known as Ti Legliz, or Little Church, the grass-roots movement has remained one of the few viable centers of resistance to the military-dominated Government that overthrew Father Aristide as President nearly three years ago (1994, July 24, sec. 1, p. 3).

The positive portrayals of Aristide reached their height with stories on his triumphant return from exile. The day before Aristide's return, Rohter filed this lead (1994, October 15, sec. 1, p. 6):

> With the return of the Rev. Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the country's exiled President, just a day away, Haiti was swept by a wave of joyous anticipation and a sudden burst of energy today as people across the country poured their efforts into preparing a welcome for their leader.

The "Week in Review" essay painted Aristide's return in religious dimensions (1994, October 16, sec. 4, p. 5):

> As befits a man of the cloth whose long-suffering followers call him "ti pwofet," or the "little prophet," his return was celebrated with a fervor that was almost religious in its intensity and as an occasion that offered the promise of deliverance after a generation in the wilderness.

The disapprobation of Aristide began soon after, as U.S. officials made public their differences with Aristide. Of particular concern, Aristide would not conform to U.S. policy on the retention of an army and the privatization of industries. Though both proposals ran counter to the Lavalas movement that Rohter had only recently proclaimed, his reporting took a negative tack.

Indeed, the day after Aristide returned to power, Rohter published a front-page story in the Times Sunday edition that suggested the president would need to improve his relationship with the United States. "Even after the American troops leave, Father Aristide, who in his earlier, radical days derided the United States as 'the cold country to our north,' will have to contend with the large number of American diplomats, economists and other experts who have come here to help him build democracy" (1994, October 16, sec. 1, p. 1). The "Week in Review" essay for the same day said Aristide "must now prove he can speak the pragmatic language of his American patrons" (1994, October 16, sec. 4, p. 5).

The retention of the Haitian army was a persistent theme and Rohter consistently gave voice to U.S. officials who called for retaining the army -- even when those officials responded in elliptical fashion. "Asked recently why a country that has no external enemies needs a standing army, Stanley Schrager, a spokesman for the American Embassy here, said such a force was an essential part of the 'iconography' of nationhood" (1994, November 22, p. 8A). Though Rohter pointed out that Aristide's government feared that Americans really wanted an American-trained and influenced "political counterweight" to the progressive government, his reporting mostly was dominated by the official American viewpoint.

Throughout 1995, U.S. officials also struggled to get Aristide to accept the privatization of industry, including the telephone and electric utilities, banks and the main port. Aristide though feared foreign ownership.

Rohter's reporting embraced the necessity of privatization. "The issue is crucial because millions of dollars in foreign assistance to Haiti are contingent on the Government's agreeing to and carrying out a comprehensive privatization program." He continued: "'These guys will take a major hit' if the privatization program is not put into effect, one diplomat said." (1995, October 14, sec. 1, p. 2). Rohter began another story:

> There are just 66,000 telephone lines in all of Haiti, and the government-run telephone company says it does not have the money to install more. The electric company, airport and harbor, also Government-owned and in need of modernization, complain of the same lack of funds.
>
> Selling a share of those and other state enterprises to private investors might appear to offer a promising way out

for a poor, nearly bankrupt country (1995, October 19, 9A).

The disapprobation could also be seen in Rohter's reporting of Aristide's decision to quit the priesthood in November 1994. The act led to a reevaluation by Rohter of Aristide's religious perspective. The Lavalas movement that Rohter once depicted in uplifting terms was fit into a more negative category, "espousal of a leftist liberation theology," "a blend of Marxist analysis and Catholic doctrine." Rohter also pointed out that the Salesian order expelled Aristide "and condemned him as a radical and undisciplined priest" (1994, November 17, p. 1A). The "Week in Review" essay further pursued the radical label. "Almost from the day he was ordained in 1982, Haiti's bishops have regarded Father Aristide as a dangerous renegade and leftist radical, a badge he has often worn proudly" (1994, November 20, sec. 4, p. 2).

As disagreements intensified between Aristide and U.S. officials, the disapprobation in Rohter's reporting increased. In November 1995, Aristide's cousin was murdered in an attack linked to paramilitary forces. In an impassioned eulogy, Aristide called out for vengeance and also indirectly criticized the United States for slowing Haiti's progress against such violence. Rohter's reporting was equally impassioned. He called the eulogy a "tirade" and his lead, played on page one, found dramatic consequences in Aristide's words.

> With an emotional outburst at the funeral of a slain relative a week ago, President Jean-Bertrand Aristide set off an outbreak of street violence, provoked panic among Haiti's elite and undermined his relations with the United States and

other members of the international coalition that restored him to power a year ago (1995, November 19, sec. 1, p. 1).

Even after the election of his successor in February 1996, Rohter questioned Aristide. In a story headlined, "In or Out of Presidency, Aristide Is Still the Issue," Rohter said that foreign diplomats had been suggesting "only half in jest" that Aristide disappear. "'How about a six-month, round-the-world cruise?' one asked" (1996, February 9, p. 6A).

In these ways, Rohter's reporting offered a second strategy -- the approbation and then disapprobation of Aristide. Related to the portrayals of Aristide were portrayals of his sworn enemies, the paramilitary group FRAPH.

THE AVOIDANCE OF U.S.-FRAPH TIES

FRAPH -- the Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti -- played a crucial role in Haitian affairs. The most feared of the heavily armed paramilitary groups, sometimes called attaches because they attached themselves to the military, FRAPH was created after the September 1991 coup to suppress opposition to the junta. Its members were descendants -- often literally -- of the Tontons Macoute, the death squads of the Duvalier dictatorship. In October 1994, Allan Nairn of The Nation broke the story that the leader of FRAPH, Emmanuel (Toto) Constant, was on the CIA payroll, that U.S. officials were well aware of the U.S.-FRAPH relationship and that U.S. funds were used to support the group (Nairn, 1994a; 1994b; 1996).

In that context, Rohter's work on FRAPH can be seen as avoiding the group's real significance. Perhaps a result of

Rohter's ignorance of the group's origins or the deliberate machinations of the State Department or both, the reports misled and misinformed. Even after Nairn's reports appeared, Rohter did not substantially probe ties between FRAPH and the United States.

It took almost three months for Rohter's reporting to reflect the terrorizing role that FRAPH played in Haitian affairs. His first mention of the group appeared at the end of a story on September 29, 1994. A crowd of pro-Aristide supporters had been fired upon by FRAPH members. A man was killed (1994, September 29, 16A). The killing seemed to alert Rohter to FRAPH's dangers. Two days later, he began a series of reports on the group. The reports indeed chronicled the terror and violence. Yet the reports are most interesting in retrospect as Rohter struggled to understand and explain U.S. reluctance to deal with the obvious threat to Haitian society. The possibility that the United States might have been involved with and supporting FRAPH was never raised.

In a page-one story on October 1, 1994, Rohter pointed out how FRAPH was hindering Haiti's democratic movement.

> After two days of bloodshed in which armed paramilitary groups attacked demonstrators here, the United States finds its mission to install democracy in Haiti jeopardized by its reluctance to begin disarming the paramilitary gunmen known as attaches. . . . But an American military spokesman today defended the policy of inaction, saying it was up to Haitians to police themselves (1994, October 1, p. 1A).

Rohter noted that "many Haitians say they are astonished that the American forces have not yet moved against the attaches, many of whom belong to a group called the Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti, or Fraph."

In the same article, Rohter detailed the reasons that U.S. forces should move against FRAPH: the threat to the people; the alarm of other U.N. nations; the increasing violence that might cause an early withdrawal of U.S. troops; and the possible erosion of support among ordinary Haitians. Rohter used an anonymous "Latin American diplomat" to sum up the argument: "'They have got to disarm these people. They are already paying the political cost of being here, so why not do the job right?'" (1994, October 1, p. 1A).

On October 4, 1994, Rohter did a brief, 400-word profile of FRAPH and fingered Emmanuel (Toto) Constant as its leader, calling him "a former diplomat" (1994, October 4, p. 10A). He said of FRAPH: "Its gunmen are believed to have been involved in incidents of murder, rape, torture, arson and other crimes on behalf of Haiti's military regime." In a separate story that same day, Rohter reported that U.S. forces had "finally" moved against FRAPH. "By striking decisively at the headquarters of the most belligerent and feared of those groups, known as Fraph, the American forces that began landing here two weeks ago scored a significant political victory and raised their stock among the populace." But, Rohter noted, the members taken into custody did not include Constant, the leader (1994, October 4, p. 10A).

However, the next day, Rohter reported, Constant appeared at a press conference and said he would lay down his arms and no longer oppose the return of Aristide. The press conference, Rohter said, "was initially announced by the American Embassy, and American Embassy personnel provided the sound system, podium and technical assistance for his first public appearance since the American occupation began" (1994, October 5, p. 1A). At the end of the story, an adviser to Aristide questioned why Constant was not arrested. "Constant is the leader of a terrorist organization responsible for the deaths of thousands of people in this country, and one has to ask why the multinational force not only permits him to walk around free but lets him make speeches in front of the National Palace." But Rohter did not draw the connection between FRAPH and the United States.

Five days later, in a Sunday "Week in Review" essay, Rohter reported what other journalists had already revealed in the weeks before: "Constant, leader of the paramilitary group Fraph, which was responsible for hundreds of government-ordered murders and rapes, had been a paid informer for the C.I.A. and was on its payroll when his group committed some of its worst crimes" (1994, October 9, sec. 4, p. 5).

Even after FRAPH was tied to the United States, Rohter did not pursue the connection. On October 19, Rohter reported that FRAPH gunmen were still terrorizing the population and that Haitian officials were "quickly growing alarmed at the unwillingness of American troops here to disarm and arrest paramilitary gunmen." Officials were also calling for the arrest of Constant. Rohter noted, however, that after the news conference "orchestrated by the American Embassy," Constant had "promptly dropped out of sight" (1994, October 19, p. 3A).

It was not until January 1995 that Rohter began to probe in his reporting the U.S. ties to FRAPH. For many Haitians, Rohter said, "the American have turned out to be not saviors of the Haitian people, but rather allies of the paramilitary groups that oppressed Haitians for a generation" (1995, January 17, p. 3A). Even in this report, Rohter gave voice to U.S. interpretations. The "American cooperation with Fraph appears to have high-level blessing," he said, and continued:

> Maj. Regina M. Largent, a spokeswoman for the United States military in Port-au-Prince, said Special Forces units around the country had been told by headquarters that Fraph was 'a recognized political organization.' Major Largent likened the differences between Fraph and President Aristide's Lavalas movement to those between political parties in the United States (p. 3A).

In early 1995, Constant somehow managed to leave Haiti, obtain a tourist visa to the United States and disappear. U.S. news media carried word of Constant's actions in February 1995. In perhaps his most pointed avoidance of the U.S.-FRAPH relationship, Rohter gave over his lead to U.S. officials' protestations of innocence:

> In what American officials describe as an embarrassing but innocent bureaucratic blunder, the leader of Haiti's most notorious paramilitary group was permitted to enter the United States on a tourist visa late last year, and has now dropped out of sight (1995, February 14, p. 8A).

With such accounts, Rohter's reporting effected a third strategy -- the avoidance of U.S.-FRAPH ties. A fourth and final strategy, the degradation of Haiti, is examined in the next section.

THE DEGRADATION OF THE NATION

A more subtle strategy in Rohter's correspondence was the degradation of Haitian life. In numerous reports, Rohter offered a portrait of Haiti as a backward society whose religious, political and social customs rendered it "ungovernable."

For example, in an early "Week in Review" piece, Rohter saw Haiti as "a land without a country" (1994, August 14, sec. 4, p. 3). He detailed the incredible poverty that plagues the populace and provided a litany of misery: a per capita income of $370, the poorest in the Western hemisphere; a life expectancy of 56 years; 70 percent of children malnourished; an illiteracy rate of almost 70 percent. But the most difficult obstacles facing the construction of a nation, according to Rohter's source, "are mot material -- they are psychological and cultural." Haitians are "distrustful of government" and also harbor a "suspicion of foreigners." Rohter continued:

> In addition, Haiti's political culture has long been characterized by what Roger Gaillard, a leading historian, describes as "an admiration of force, even among educated Haitians." Political disputes are settled not by negotiation, but through the exercise of power, often in crude and brutal fashion, and respect for democractic procedures and obligations is minimal.

Rohter used another source to return to the same theme a month later. "'Beyond Aristide, there is the more basic question of the governability of the country,' said Suzy Castor, co-director of the Research Training Center for Economic and Social Development" (1994, September 25, sec. 1, p. 16). Rohter also quoted an unnamed American official on Haiti's "200 years of institutional failure." Another report three weeks after said (1994, October 16, sec. 4, p. 5):

> Just this month, an American diplomat here pronounced himself perplexed by the "Alice in Wonderland quality" of Haitian politics, where words seem to mean only what their speakers want them to mean. Nor is he the first to feel confused. Citing the phrase coined by a former ambassador, diplomats here routinely counsel new arrivals that in Haiti it is best to believe "nothing you hear and only half of what you see."

Rohter's description of the July 1995 elections was headlined: "So Far at Least, Inept Is the Kindest Word for Haitian Democracy." He stated, "It is not easy to determine whether last week's irregularities were the product of deliberate wrongdoing or simply an extraordinary display of incompetence" (1995, July 2, sec. 4, p. 3).

Rohter also could not resist exploiting the use of voodoo by Haitians. His writing suggested that Haitians were a backwards people of primitive beliefs. Writing about preparations for All Souls' Day, he reported that the mayor "found it necessary to urge residents of the capital to stop stealing bones, which are used in voodoo rituals, from tombs in the cemetery" (1994, November 2, p. 4A). He also reported that near one tomb, "a large crowd had gathered to watch as voodoo practicioners tried to communicate with the dead and the smell of clairin, or Haitian moonshine, permeated the air." On Christmas Day 1994, Rohter again returned to voodoo. Although he did attempt to explain how Haitian society combines Catholicism and voodoo, he also pursued legends of zombies and the use of voodoo as vengeance (1994, December 25, sec. 4, p. 1). The article was accompanied by a photograph of animal sacrifice.

Rohter's often condescending view of Haitian life can also be discerned in his choice of sources. American officials, embassy spokesmen and Latin American diplomats dominate Rohter's work. Even when he is attempting to discuss aspects of Haitian life, Rohter turns to academics in the United States, such as Anthony Maingot, a Caribbean scholar at Florida International University in Miami or Ian Martin, a Haiti expert at the Carnegie Endowment for Peace in Washington. Haitian men and women appear only irregularly in Rohter's work. When they do, the Haitians make token appearances for anonymous quotes, such as "a toothless vendor" and "a middle-aged lawyer in a rumpled blue seersucker suit" (1994, August 2, 3A). In these ways, Rohter's correspondence offered a strategy designed to degrade and demean Haiti.

DISCUSSION: NEWS VALUES IN A NEW WORLD

With the end of the Cold War, U.S. news coverage of international affairs finds itself at a crossroads. For a previous generation or more of reporters and editors, the world could be organized and explained in relation to the political, military, economic and cultural rivalry of two superpowers. News values -- the criteria by which the news media select, order, report and give meaning to events -- were structured by this one dominant model, a model that has tumbled with the stones from the Berlin Wall.

The questions facing the New York Times and other news organizations: How then is international news to be defined in this new era? What news values will guide the selection and shaping of events? Some have seen the era as an expansive time of promise for journalism. Galtung and Vincent (1992) have offered the possibilty of aggressive, progressive news values that promote social justice. They see the chance for "a new global and human journalism, liberated from visible and invisible repression, capable of reflecting in its social communication the dialectic between the global nature of our problems and our perception of them" (p. 24). Traber (1993) too has seen the opportunity for renewed news values. "One of the biggest challenges of the new international information order," he said (p. 156), "is to develop new and different criteria for newsworthiness."

Others scholars have been more pessimistic. Unsettled by the responsibility of covering the world without an overarching structure, unprepared for the cauldron of political, religious, and ethnic strife released in this new era, the press may willingly cede news values to policymakers, these scholars say. In this perspective, U.S. coverage of international news more than ever will be dictated by the actions and initiatives of U.S. foreign policy. Writing even before the fall of the Wall, Hallin saw the dissolution of the Cold War model in international news coverage. In its stead, however, Hallin saw bleak possibilities. Most likely, he said, the times would see "an extended period of public confusion and uncertainty about world politics, and a passive, sometimes grudging consent to the decisions of the foreign policy establishment" (p. 23).

Others too have seen no reason for hope in post-Cold War news. Altschull (1995) notes the possibilities offered the news media in "the age of globalization." Yet despite his hope that "the press will turn away from its historic role as blind chronicler of conflict and search out a different role, that of conflict resolver," his first law of journalism remains: "In all press systems, the news media are agents of those who exercise political and economic power" (pp. 442, 440).

The reporting of Larry Rohter from Haiti supports this cheerless view of post-Cold War news values.[4] In the amount of coverage, the nature of the content, and the strategies offered, Rohter's reporting can be seen as working in concert with U.S. foreign policy. Even as that policy shifted course -- rejecting the junta, warily restoring Aristide but insisting that he accept U.S. policy -- so too did the reporting.

The influence of U.S. foreign policy can be seen quite readily in the sheer amount of Rohter's Haitian coverage. As the Clinton administration made Haiti one of its first major foreign policy campaigns, Rohter gave over most of his work for almost two years to following Haiti. The Caribbean correspondent of the Times in 20 months filed, for example, five stories from El Salvador, three stories from Colombia, three stories from the Honduras, two stories from Trinidad, and none from the Dominican Republic. From Haiti, as previously discussed, Rohter filed 120 stories.

The strategies of Rohter's reporting also worked in concert with U.S. policy. Rohter's reporting did not stray far from U.S. policy perspectives. As the United States prepared for an invasion to remove Cedras, U.S. officials postured mightily through Rohter's reporting. Rohter's denunciations of the regime and his chronicling of the junta's represssion made a case for U.S. intervention. At the same time, his depictions of Aristide as the rightful leader whose return would bring peace and reconciliation also bolstered the U.S. case.

When Aristide and U.S. policy soon began to conflict, Rohter's strategies shifted. The uplifting portrayals of Aristide and the Lavalas movement segued to critical accounts of intransigent ideology and radical leftist politics. As FRAPH continued to terrorize the population and U.S. forces refused to move against them, Rohter's avoidance of the U.S.-FRAPH relationship shielded from view the U.S. establishment of a conservative "counterweight" to Aristide's progressive politics. And Rohter's depiction of Haiti as an "ungovernable" place whose people were not "culturally or psychologically" equipped for the demands of democracy captured the patronizing and paternalistic attitudes that have driven U.S. imperialism in the Caribbean for decades.

For those then who hope the changes wrought by the end of the Cold War will yield a change in international news values, Times coverage from Haiti offers little comfort. The opportunity for change surely exists. As Gwertzman's memo to the foreign staff suggests, the press itself recognizes these times as times of transition. But in the absence of a new model -- new strategies designed to consciously resist the dictates of policy and power -- much of the world and its people will remain foreign to U.S. news.

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NOTES

1. The brief account of recent U.S-Haiti relations has been derived from Paul Farmer's (1994) excellent book, The Uses of Haiti and Haiti: Dangerous Crossroads by the North American Congress of Latin America (1995).

2. In May 1994, perhaps in response to the hunger srike of civil rights activist Randall Robinson, Clinton changed his policy on returning refugees. Still not permitted entry to the United States, they were placed in off-shore "safe havens."

3. The biography of Larry Rohter was supplied by The New York Times foreign desk. Rohter declined to be interviewed for this paper.

4. Ettema (1994) has offered an interesting argument that readers may learn to enact from the news their own alternative readings of hope and solidarity. He writes:

> Now, in a time when no metanarrative compels our assent, our contribution to the moral progress that Rorty envisioned may have less to do with teaching the journalist how to write stories than with teaching the audience how to read stories for the contrasting scenarios that they might imply and how to enlist stories in the alternative projects that they can facilitate (pp. 19-20).

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Walt Disney, 1941 - 1966:

Mass Media Products in Service of the American Way

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Walt Disney, 1941 - 1966:

Mass Media Products in Service of the American Way

> We just try to make a good picture. Then the professors come along and tell us what we do.
>
> \- Walt Disney[1]

> George Washington may be the father of this country, Dad, but Walt Disney is its guardian.
>
> \- Dick Schaap paraphrasing his six-year-old son[2]

Offered a choice between "innocent fun" and "philosophical worldview" to characterize the work of Walt Disney, most people would select the former. This, of course, is just as Walt would have it. As evidenced by the first of the above quotes, he constantly asserted that his products were just simple entertainment meant to speak to the child in all of us, and that was that; no hidden meaning, no underlying agenda. This held true right through to the end of his life, for even when he admitted to a specific mission, it was simply "to bring happiness to millions."[3] Even former Disney animators like John

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[1] As quoted in Scott Heller, "Dissecting Disney," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 16 February 1994 (Vol. 40, #24), A8.

[2] Dick Schaap, "Culture Shock: Williamsburg & Disney World, Back To Back," *The New York Times*, 28 September 1975.

[3] As quoted in Richard Schickel, *The Disney Version: The Life, Times, Art and Commerce of Walt Disney* (New York: Touchstone Books, 1985), 9.

Hubley have maintained that their creative skill was dedicated to perfecting the medium's technical form rather than injecting any social commentary.[4]

Walt and his studio were not the sole creators of this innocently magical image, however; both contemporary and subsequent commentators helped considerably in this regard. Reviews focused much of the time on the technical innovations or aesthetics of Disney's film and television productions, and, for the most part, were as laudatory as the *New Republic*'s David Low, whose 1942 article proclaimed Disney "to be the most significant figure in graphic art since Leonardo da Vinci."[5] Though some social and psychological critiques of Disney's work did appear, they were often met with indifference or even disdain, as embodied by William de Mille's article "Mickey versus Popeye", a biting parody of such commentary.[6] As Conrad Kottak notes, such apathy stems from the fact that Kottak's fellow anthropologists and other like-minded academics and intellectuals "tend to regard aspects of American 'pop' [arts] as trivial and unworthy of serious analysis."[7] Finally, of the voluminous awards which Walt received during his lifetime, most touched upon the superficial platitudes of "service to children" or "most original filmmaking."[8] Given such image-building, it is none too surprising that much of the world envisions "Uncle Walt" as all innocence and light, a man whose legacy is one of eternal youth and childlike joy.

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[4] As quoted in Holly Allen and Michael Denning, "The Cartoonists' Front," *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, Winter 1993 (Vol. 92, #1), 108-9.

[5] As quoted in Steven Watts, "Walt Disney: Art and Politics in the American Century," *The Journal of American History*, June 1995 (Vol. 82, #1), 86.

[6] Gregory A. Waller, "Mickey, Walt, and Film Criticism from *Steamboat Willie* to *Bambi*," in Danny Peary and Gerald Peary, eds., *The American Animated Cartoon: A Critical Anthology* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1980), 51.

[7] Conrad Philip Kottak, "Anthropological Analysis of Mass Enculturation," in Conrad Philip Kottak, ed., *Researching American Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1982), 42.

[8] As quoted in Marc Eliot, *Walt Disney: Hollywood's Dark Prince* (New York: Birch Lane Press, 1993), 76, 206.

One citation stands out, however, not only for its importance, but also for its recognition of a deeper meaning in Disney's work. Upon presenting Walt with the Presidential Medal of Freedom in September 1964, President Lyndon Johnson spoke but a single sentence: "Artist and impresario, in the course of entertaining an age, he has created an American folklore."[9] Yet, in those sixteen words, the President saw past Disney's claim to be a simple entertainer and revealed, instead, the "guardian of America" which Schaap alluded to in the second of our opening quotes. Folklore is defined in *Webster's New World Dictionary* as "the traditional beliefs and legends of a people," and was extremely apropos in this case, for it describes much of what Walt attempted to create through his work, especially after 1941. Despite Disney's protests to the contrary, his products were not merely innocent fun, but proffered a particular mythic version of America to which all should pay homage and aspire; in short, products which served to strengthen "the American Way of Life."

That such a worldview permeates Disney's work seems only natural, for it arose during the 1930s, just as the Walt Disney Studio was beginning to succeed and grow. As Warren Susman persuasively argues, the notion of a national "culture" gained wide acceptance in the early part of the decade, and from its "patterns of behavior and belief, values and life-styles, symbols and meanings," an "American Way" developed.[10] Though simplification cannot do it full justice, the concept can be boiled down to several traits: emphasis of individual liberty through democracy and individual opportunity through entrepreneurship in the free enterprise system; devotion to hard work, ingenuity, and self-reliance; confidence that our pioneering spirit will bring progress and ever-increasing abundance, with technology as a critical ally; importance of family, community, religion, and morality; and dedication to organization and man's mastery over land and nature.[11]

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[9] Lyndon B. Johnson, "Remarks at the Presentation of the 1964 Presidential Medal of Freedom Awards, September 14, 1964," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Lyndon B. Johnson*, Book II (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965), 1064.

[10] Warren I. Susman, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 153-4.

Susman continues that, despite the glaring class and racial differences which remained, many Americans "had begun to believe they had found the American Way of Life and had created a culture and that it was good. Believing so had become part of the culture itself."[12] But such a mindset closed out those who could not or would not pursue this way of life, thus allowing the rest of the country to either ignore them or label them "un-American."

From 1941, much of Walt Disney's work reflected and reinforced this worldview, as cultural historian Steven Watts recounts: "[Disney's efforts] were channeled into a full-fledged defense of the 'American Way.' This ideological influence pervaded a wave of vaguely historical Disney films . . . which revived a populist image of the American WASP 'folk,' surrounded them with a defensive cultural embankment, and homogenized the social norms and characteristics of the group within."[13] The goal of this essay is to demonstrate that such a message was prominent not only in feature films, but across a broad range of Walt's products. Before proceeding, however, two questions need answering, the first of which is why focus on the final twenty-six years of Disney's career?

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[11] *Ibid.*, 189-202.

[12] *Ibid.*, 202.

[13] Watts, "Walt Disney: Art and Politics in the American Century," 105-6.

Admittedly, some elements of the American Way had appeared in Disney material prior to 1941, most noticeably in *The Three Little Pigs* of 1933, with its emphasis on self-reliance, hard work, and organization, and in the Mickey Mouse shorts of the mid-'30s which most often portrayed Mickey as some sort of entrepreneur.[14] But in the post-'41 period, the appearance of these "American" traits became significantly more overt and more frequent as a result of several key events. For one, the Disney Studio's movement away from animated material accelerated rapidly after 1940, a development discussed further below, but, suffice to say, the increased realistic nature of live-action films and amusement parks furnished more opportunities to manipulate the American past for a particular purpose.

Of greater importance to this period, however, were the scars Walt bore following the bitter strike of half his work force during the summer of 1941. Despite working his staff hard, Disney believed that he was a fair and generous employer, and either could not or would not see that his workers were frustrated by the lack of individual recognition, grumbling over the haphazard salary structure, and chafing under Walt's paternal code of behavior.[15] The move to a spacious new studio in 1940 only widened this difference in perception, and, after Disney refused to sanction an independent union, half his force walked out and stayed out for three months.

Walt felt intensely betrayed and believed that many of the strikers had been duped by a few "Communist" instigators.[16] In the ensuing years, many talented employees left or were forced out by Walt, and the studio never did regain the creative camaraderie and spirit that marked its "golden age." More importantly, Disney sensed that the American Way of Life, his way of life, was under siege, and went on to play a considerable role in fighting alleged Communist influence throughout Hollywood by serving as First Vice President of the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals and by successfully prodding both the state and federal Un-American Activities committees to investigate the motion picture industry in the mid-'40s.[17] Thus, the strike and the government-mediated solution that was imposed upon the studio brought forth a spirited defense of the American Way in Disney's works after 1941, one which particularly emphasized its inherent populist celebration of the individual and dislike of big, impersonal, bureaucratic organizations.

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[14] Schickel, *The Disney Version*, 142, 154-5.

[15] Eliot, *Walt Disney: Hollywood's Dark Prince*, 107.

[16] For Disney's personal thoughts in this regard, please see Leonard Mosley, *Disney's World* (Chelsea, MI: Scarborough House, 1990), 196; and "The Testimony of Walter E. Disney Before the

The second question to which we must briefly turn before proceeding is that of importance: even if Disney's products are found to push a particular vision, does it really matter, for do they have an impact on what their audience thinks and feels? To address this query, one must begin with, of all people, Aldous Huxley.

In his 1933 novel *Brave New World*, Huxley implied that social control might best be gained and maintained, not through the coercive method of George Orwell's *1984*, but rather through a system which relies upon rewards and pleasure to inspire self-policing and self-censorship amongst the populace.[18] A good method to ensure such self-control is to

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House Committee on Un-American Activities," in Peary and Peary, eds., *The American Animated Cartoon*, 93-8.

[17] Disney's role in this effort is well-documented; two of the sources which I have found most helpful are Allen and Denning, "The Cartoonists' Front," 89-102; and Eliot, *Walt Disney: Hollywood's Dark Prince*, 178-97.

[18] Much of this section is indebted to the thoughts and theories of Stephen M. Fjellman, *Vinyl Leaves: Walt Disney World and America* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992), 1-57.

get people "to believe essentially the same stories about what the world is and why the way it is is good, true, and beautiful."[19] Those stories are passed on through enculturation, the process whereby individuals learn the particular cultural traditions, values, and behaviors needed to function in a given society.[20] Thus, if one can infiltrate the enculturation process with stories of one's own choosing or even design, then that person or organization can impact the society at large.

Three trends in post-World War II America have helped facilitate the construction of new stories and their infiltration of the enculturation system, though we can only briefly summarize them here. First, as America's devotion to commodities has continued to increase, consumption and its attendant choices have come to define "freedom" and "happiness" for many, and our initial consumption of material goods has been joined by a consumption of "the ideas of things," like history, in which symbols masquerade as substance.[21]

This obsession with commodities has given rise to a second with entertainment, for if everything is simply a "product" to be consumed, then all must be fun or interesting if they are to compete for our attention; in short, everything must be entertaining. Thus, instead of demanding the critical thinking that is necessary to education and information-processing, we are given a flood of little, bite-sized nuggets of "info-" or "edutainment", all of which are designed precisely for fun consumption regardless of whether they pertain to a good, an emotion, or an idea.[22]

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[19] *Ibid.*, 3.

[20] Lebriz Tosuner-Fikes, "A Guide for Anthropological Fieldwork on Contemporary American Culture," in Kottak, ed., *Researching American Culture*.

[21] Fjellman, *Vinyl Leaves*, 4-6, 9-10, 455.

[22] *Ibid.*, 6, 53-4.

This flood of "infotainment" leads to a third development which leaves us increasingly unable to discern the real from the fake and increasingly indifferent even when we can. As long as it feels and looks all right, it's fine. Such apathy opens the door to the phenomenon of recontextualization, whereby symbols, images, and events are ripped from their historical and contextual moorings and co-opted in ways that manipulate or even completely destroy the originally intended meaning.[23] Hence, these three trends in American society have furnished the tools to design stories of one's own choosing and, by dint of their ubiquity, have also created more inviting circumstances for slipping those stories into the enculturation mainstream.

The parallels with Disney become apparent with increasing study, for, as will be shown below, Walt's products have made use of these trends for many years. In doing so, his particular stories have infiltrated our enculturation process and, with their "Huxley-an" emphasis on pleasure and fun, have quite likely impacted the self-policing behavior and beliefs of many human beings, especially children.[24] With this window of opportunity available, then, the content of those stories, their particular message, becomes important. Is it one which serves to highlight the American Way or, as Walt claimed, one just dedicated to childlike innocence? To find out, we must now turn to the material itself.

In examining Disney's products between 1941 and 1966, it is helpful, indeed necessary, to view the man himself, in the words of Professor Watts, "as a historical actor."[25] Nowadays, we have a penchant for seeing "Walt Disney" as some entity, floating separate and alone above the earth, but, in reality, Walt Disney influenced and was influenced by the historical forces of his times, and this interplay helped shape the messages within his works, be they films, TV shows, or amusement parks.

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[23] See *Ibid.*, 6, 23-4, 31-3; and Michael R. Real, *Mass-Mediated Culture* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1977), 64-5.

[24] See Kottak, "Anthropological Analysis of Mass Enculturation," 65; Fjellman, *Vinyl Leaves*, xv-xvi, 10; Schickel, *The Disney Version*, 18; and William F. Powers, "EEEEK?," *Washington Post*, 6 August 1995.

With this consideration in mind, let us examine the first of these mass media products for any prominent display of elements of the American Way of Life. In this section, we begin by examining Disney's animated productions, both short and feature length, then review his live-action and "mixed" (live and cartoon) film work, and finish with a separate consideration of his creations during World War II.[*]

Though the world of the cartoon is naturally assumed to be the world of childlike fantasy, after 1940 Walt seems to have frequently infused his animation with aspects of the American Way. The key role of the individual in democracy and the free-enterprise system was often highlighted in shorts such as *Ben and Me* (1953) in which a simple church mouse befriends Ben Franklin and eventually helps to write the opening lines of the Declaration of Independence, and in features like *Dumbo* (1941) which is a Horatio Alger piece at heart, as Dumbo learns to profit from his deformity in becoming the world's only flying elephant.[26]

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[25] Watts, "Walt Disney: Art and Politics in the American Century," 85.

[*] Please note: all films and television episodes which are discussed throughout the rest of the paper will generally hew to a format of title followed by release or broadcast date in parentheses; for example, *Toot, Whistle, Plunk, and Boom* (1953) in the case of films, and "Magic Highway U.S.A." (1958) in the case of TV episodes.

[26] See Richard Holliss and Brian Sibley, *The Disney Studio Story* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1988), 171; and Michael Wilmington, "*Dumbo*," in Peary and Peary, eds., *The American Animated Cartoon*, 76-7, 81.

Conversely, other pieces warn against that which threatens or frustrates democracy and free enterprise. The aptly titled *Cold War* (1951) seems to evoke the dangers of the internal Communist threat, as Goofy "is plagued by a cold virus, which quickly assumes a menacing character of its own," according to film historians Richard Holliss and Brian Sibley.[27] Having chafed under the treatment he received from several U.S. government agencies during World War II concerning unpaid bills and commandeered equipment, Disney's populist distaste for the impersonal bureaucracy which throttles individual initiative is palpable in *Pigs Is Pigs* (1954) where, in the words of Holliss and Sibley, "bureaucratic red tape slows up a simple decision about whether guinea pigs are pets or pigs."[28]

Further promotion of the American Way of Life continued to pop up throughout Walt's animated work. *The Nifty Nineties* (1941), in which Mickey and Minnie enjoy a turn-of-the-century existence, and *The Little House* (1952) both celebrate the small-town community, while Hollywood historian Marc Eliot recounts that *Cinderella* (1950) ultimately promotes "the sanctity of family held together by unshakable moral conviction."[29] Shorts such as *A Cowboy Needs A Horse* (1956) and *Eyes In Outer Space* (1959) pay homage to America's pioneering spirit and her belief in the benefits of technology, respectively. With its focus on mankind's future ability to control the weather, the latter piece is also an affirmation of man's mastery over nature.[30]

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[27] Holliss and Sibley, *The Disney Studio Story*, 165.
[28] *Ibid.*, 172.
[29] Eliot, *Walt Disney: Hollywood's Dark Prince*, 208.
[30] Holliss and Sibley, *The Disney Studio Story*, 183.

But Disney's cartoons served the free enterprise system and the nation's worship of technology in more direct fashion, as well. From 1945 through 1951, the studio produced eight shorts of varying length for such large firms as Dow Chemical and Firestone which used them as educational and promotional pieces in a variety of economic, scholastic, and other public forums.[31] Though these films probably reached a decidedly smaller audience than that of a regular cartoon, countless adults and children were told through Disney's "innocent magic" how Westinghouse Electric's ever-improving lighting system would bring about *The Dawn of Better Living* (1945) or how we would all gain from General Electric's advances in *Jet Propulsion* (1946). All of these shorts either portrayed technology as our savior or demonstrated the advantages of man's mastery over the land, and, as such, are little-known but significant examples of Walt's service to the American Way.

In comparing Disney's early cartoons to his later animated work, movie historian Robert Sklar comments that the latter became more realistic as "they rejoined the straight and narrow path of time . . . in expressing the spirit of social purpose, the re-enforcing of old values."[32] As Walt moved away from animation and toward live-action film, or a combination of the two called "mixed", this trend toward reality was naturally amplified. But Disney remained unbowed, for he simply sculptured reality to reflect his idealized version of the United States. Consequently, many of these pictures are devoted to strengthening the American Way of Life.

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[31] Richard Shale, *Donald Duck Joins Up: The Walt Disney Studio During World War II* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1982), 111-2.

[32] Robert Sklar, *Movie-Made America: A Cultural History of American Movies* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 200.

One of the ways in which they accomplished this was through the use of selective history. In the words of historian Mike Wallace, "Walt's approach to the past was . . . not to reproduce it, but to improve it" (his emphasis).[33] Thus, as one old studio hand put it, "What we create is 'Disney Realism,' sort of Utopian in nature, where we carefully program out all the negative, unwanted elements and program in the positive elements."[34] In terms of our previous discussion concerning the three trends in American society, while this practice may not qualify as outright recontextualization, it still exemplifies the misleading manipulation which can result from the commodification of history. As we shall see further below, this same historical editing process was also employed by Walt in several of his television shows and throughout his amusement parks, but, for now, our focus is on live-action and mixed films.

In these pictures, Disney used the past to further the American Way of Life in several ways. Some features simply attempted to strike a patriotic chord by glorifying key moments in United States history, but, in doing so, they often took considerable liberties which had the effect of ignoring the contradictions and struggles of our past, a fault noted by several contemporary critics of the Civil War-based *The Great Locomotive Chase* (1956) and the Revolutionary War piece *Johnny Tremain* (1957), the second of which, Holliss and Sibley note, was viewed as "too light-hearted, . . . [even] comic."[35]

As discussed earlier, Walt appears to have internalized what Susman and Watts describe as the American Way's tendency to envision a WASP-like community and exclude "the Other". This second use of selective history allowed Disney's films to highlight aspects of the American ideal, while simultaneously demonizing or neglecting those elements which did not fit within its confines. Hence, in pictures such as *Westward Ho, The Wagons!* (1956) and *Geronimo's Revenge* (1964) which are set on America's western frontier, Walt promotes this country's pioneering spirit, all the while depicting American Indians as little more than a threat to that progress.[36] In the same vein, according to film critic Richard Schickel, pictures such as *So Dear To My Heart* (1949) and *Follow Me, Boys* (1966) reveled in the virtues of the small-town community, "the place where [Disney] operated most comfortably," but these settings "completely lacked . . . modern reality," for they excised any hint of the "other side of the tracks."[37]

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[33] Mike Wallace, "Mickey Mouse History: Portraying the Past at Disney World," *Radical History Review*, March 1985 (#32), 35.

[34] *Ibid.*.

[35] Holliss and Sibley, *The Disney Studio Story*, 176-8.

Of course, Walt could also promote the American Way without any resort to historical blinders. Movies like *Pollyana* (1960) and *The Parent Trap* (1961) went to great lengths in demonstrating their devotion to family, while *The Shaggy Dog* (1959) and *Swiss Family Robinson* (1960) pushed the twin themes of ingenuity and self-reliance, as the protagonists used their wits to overcome foreign spies and nature's elements, respectively.[38]

In addition, Disney continued to show how technology could lead to progress for all: *The Happiest Millionaire* (1967)* paid tribute to the instrumental wizardry of the automobile and its ultimately positive effect on the lifestyles of America's citizenry, and

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[36] *Ibid.*, 178, 195.

[37] Schickel, *The Disney Version*, 301, 303-4.

[38] See Watts, "Walt Disney: Art and Politics in the American Century," 106-7; and Holliss and Sibley, *The Disney Studio Story*, 183, 187, 189.

* Please note: though released in 1967, Disney oversaw and completed the production of *The Happiest Millionaire* before his death on 15 December 1966.

20,000 Leagues Under The Sea (1954) was designed to justify the technological promise of nuclear energy as a power source of the future.[39] The studio's biographical look at Ludwig van Beethoven, *The Magnificent Rebel* (1961), celebrated, metaphorically, the integrity of the American individual; conversely, *Moon Pilot* (1962) took "a humorous swipe at the [bureaucratic] red tape surrounding America's space programme," in the words of Holliss and Sibley.[40] *The Absent Minded Professor* (1961) combined these two themes, as a lone inventor manages to, in the words of Schickel, "triumph over uncomprehending bureaucrats" and make his contribution to democracy.[41]

Some of Disney's most popular live-action films were the individual installments of his True Life Adventure series, where viewers discover the actual wonders of nature as they are transported to places like *Seal Island* (1949) and *Bear Country* (1953). Yet, these pictures are prime examples of Walt's early use of "infotainment," a trend we discussed earlier. Disney had admitted as much himself in describing the series: "This entertainment is informative."[42]

Judging by their popularity at the box office, the features were certainly entertaining, and they were also informative, but only to a limited extent, for several of the "true life" events captured on film turned out to have been pre-fabricated. In analyzing *The Living Desert* (1953), film historians Holliss and Sibley recount that a scene in which a bobcat eludes a group of wild pigs was, in fact, "achieved by filming the cat in a controlled compound."[43] Thus, "infotainment" led to a second phenomenon which we also touched on above, that of the fine line between real and fake and our increasing indifference towards it. A pioneer of both these methods, Disney employed them in upholding the "man over nature" aspect of the American Way, a development that movie critic Bosley Crowther noticed immediately: "The playful disposition to edit and arrange . . . so that it appears the wild life . . . is behaving in human and civilized ways . . . [is] all very humorous and beguiling. But it isn't true to life."[44]

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[39] See Schickel, *The Disney Version*, 304-5; and Elizabeth Walker Mechling and Jay Mechling, "The Atom According to Disney," *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, November 1995 (Vol. 81, #4), 447.

[40] Holliss and Sibley, *The Disney Studio Story*, 187, 190.

[41] Schickel, *The Disney Version*, 300.

[42] As quoted in Kathy Merlock Jackson, *Walt Disney: A Bio-Bibliography* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993), 122.

As one might expect, the studio's films during World War II represent Walt at his most patriotic, defending the American Way of Life in its hour of need.[45] The amount of work he produced for the many branches of the U.S. government is prodigious, and, despite Disney's own populist dislike of impersonal bureaucracies, he seems to have resolved any inner conflict by focusing on his individual contribution to this institutional effort, a pattern which would be repeated in his later dealings with the FBI and the federal space program.[46]

His work on behalf of the war effort took several forms, the first of which was a series of four shorts produced for the National Film Board of Canada in 1940-41 that used famous Disney characters such as Donald Duck and the Seven Dwarfs to convince Canadians to buy war bonds, an attempt which proved rather successful.[47] This work coincided with the second of Walt's wartime contributions: a diplomatic tour de force requested by the U.S. State Department.

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[43] Holliss and Sibley, *The Disney Studio Story*, 169-70.

[44] As quoted in Schickel, *The Disney Version*, 288-9.

[45] Much of this section is indebted to the painstaking work previously conducted by Shale, *Donald Duck Joins Up*. Another useful source regarding this period is Eric Smoodin, *Animating Culture: Hollywood Cartoons from the Sound Era* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993), 136-50, 168-85.

[46] See Schickel, *The Disney Version*, 269, on this point.

[47] Shale, *Donald Duck Joins Up*, 15-20.

Concerned about the possible influence of Nazism throughout the Southern hemisphere, the Roosevelt administration instituted a "Good Neighbour Policy" to shore up its geopolitical interests within the region. Under the banner of cultural exchange, Disney agreed to conduct a "Goodwill tour" of several countries in August and September of 1941 and produce a number of films which would buttress this strategic relationship and, ostensibly, provide a new outlet for the studio's pictures to make up for the now-closed European market.[48] What resulted was a wide variety of products, from the culturally and politically unifying features *Saludos Amigos* (1943) and *The Three Caballeros* (1944) to the subtle propaganda of educational and health shorts like *The Grain That Built The Hemisphere* (1943), as well as the more transparent *Der Fuehrer's Face* (1943).[49] Short or long, blatant or not, this body of work illustrates a powerful joint effort to promote the American Way.

Following the success of his Canadian shorts and America's entry into war, the third form of Disney's contribution took shape, as numerous U.S. government requests for specific productions descended upon Walt. In response, the studio often worked overtime to create a profuse number of training films for the military, some of which reduced the amount of needed practice time for Navy fliers by forty percent.[50] Disney also filled orders from several non-military agencies, his most famous piece being *The New Spirit* (1942) in which a patriotic Donald Duck, on behalf of the Treasury Department, encourages new taxpayers to comply with a recently-enacted law and provide "taxes to beat the Axis."[51] A poll later revealed that the short had positively affected the willingness to pay of thirty-seven percent of the respondents, and again demonstrated a potent combination in maintaining the American Way of Life.

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[48] See *Ibid.*, 41-2; and Smoodin, *Animating Culture*, 138-43.

[49] See Shale, *Donald Duck Joins Up*, 43-4, 49, 51-2, 62, 107; and Smoodin, *Animating Culture*, 141-2.

[50] "Walt Disney - Teacher of Tomorrow," *Look*, 17 April 1945, 25.

In his final form of war service, Walt escaped the confines of bureaucracy and produced *Victory Through Air Power* (1943) on his own initiative and at subsequent net cost to the studio. Disney was personally convinced of the wisdom of U.S. Air Corps Major Alexander Seversky's plan to use a massive number of diverse airplanes to win the war rather than a large naval force and felt compelled to try and convert the nation at large to this line of thinking.[52] Though it was not a box office hit, the film made an impact on the right kind of people, as it was eventually screened privately for British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt at an August 1943 meeting in Quebec and, according to historian Richard Shale, "may have influenced the air strategy used on June 6, 1944" in the Allied invasion of Normandy.[53] With this kind of legacy and its overall message of America's abiding faith in technology, *Victory Through Air Power* seems a most fitting and patriotic finish to our analysis of Walt's filmmaking.

Though Disney's motion pictures constitute his largest body of work, there still remain two other important mass mediums which we must examine if we are to gain a full appreciation of the American Way's prominence in his products. The first of these is television, a realm Walt initially entered on a full-time basis in 1954 and did not leave until 1981. His shows, *Disneyland* and the *Mickey Mouse Club*, were natural vehicles for Disney's particular vision of America, for they often simply ran many of the same cinematic films which we have just finished discussing. Television's unique value in this regard was that it exposed these pieces to a larger audience, as both programs consistently finished among the ratings "Top 10" (often #1) during Walt's lifetime, which is the period we will consider here.[54]

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[51] See Shale, *Donald Duck Joins Up*, 27-40; and Smoodin, *Animating Culture*, 168-83.

[52] See Shale, *Donald Duck Joins Up*, 68; and Walter Wanger, "Mickey Icarus, 1943," *The Saturday Review*, 4 September 1943, 18.

[53] Shale, *Donald Duck Joins Up*, 77.

Of course, TV produced much of its own fare which highlighted the American Way of Life, several portions of which were subsequently stitched together and released in theaters, as Disney indulged in a sort of "cross-pollination" between the two mediums.[55] From 1954 to 1966, Walt's prime time show appeared on ABC as either *Disneyland* or *Walt Disney Presents* and then on NBC as *Walt Disney's Wonderful World of Color*, and while the channel changed, the message stayed the same.

One of Disney's favorite American themes in this program was that of progress through technology. Following relatively soon after President Dwight Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace" speech before the United Nations in December 1953, as well as the pro-nuclear message of *20,000 Leagues Under The Sea*, the episode "Our Friend the Atom" (1957) was "a key rhetorical moment in the history of the naturalization and domestication of the atom," according to communications professor Elizabeth Walker Mechling.[56] Furthermore, in conjunction with the U.S. Army, Walt developed a three-part series on the federal space program during the mid-'50s which, in the words of Disney archivist Dave Smith, "succeeded in awakening an interest in [the promise of] space among Americans," and so impressed President Eisenhower that he requested a copy to show to other Pentagon officials.[57]

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[54] See Schickel, *The Disney Version*, 314; and Eliot, *Walt Disney: Hollywood's Dark Prince*, 223, 235.

[55] For a full run-down on this point, see Holliss and Sibley, *The Disney Studio Story*, 171-200.

[56] Mechling and Mechling, "The Atom According to Disney," 436, 450.

Disney also championed progress in a more earth-bound fashion by celebrating America's pioneering spirit in "Davy Crockett," a three-episode saga which aired in 1954 and highlighted the hero who cleared the wilderness and served in Congress, while simultaneously editing out any notion of his unethical and cowardly acts.[58] Man's mastery over nature was also promoted, with features such as "A Fire Called Jeremiah" (1961) and "To The South Pole For Science" (1958) focusing on the courageous skills of forest firefighters and icebreaker captains, respectively.

Running every weekday afternoon from 1955 through 1958 on ABC and in syndication from 1962 to 1965, the *Mickey Mouse Club* also contained Walt's visual paeans to the American Way of Life. Unsurprisingly, the value of technology was again a popular focus and, since this program was aimed at a new and younger audience, the user-friendliness and promise of nuclear power was repeated here in pieces such as "Encyclopedia - Uranium" (1957) and "David Stollery: Youth Takes Over The Atom" (1957).[59] In addition, Disney paid tribute to the individuals and organizations who uphold

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[57] See Jackson, *Walt Disney: A Bio-Bibliography*, 88-9; and Holliss and Sibley, *The Disney Studio Story*, 177, 180.

[58] See George Lipsitz, "The Making of Disneyland," in William Graebner, ed., *True Stories from the American Past* (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1993), 185-6; Eliot, *Walt Disney: Hollywood's Dark Prince*, 228-9; and Real, *Mass-Mediated Culture*, 61.

[59] Jerry Bowles, *Forever Hold Your Banner High! The Story of the Mickey Mouse Club and What Happened to the Mouseketeers* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1976), 133.

and protect American democracy through segments on "Inside The FBI" (1958) and "Inside The Congress" (1958).[60]

Before we conclude our examination of TV, it is worth noting that throughout his reign over these two programs, Walt seemed, once again, to be exploiting a few of the methods discussed earlier to get his message of the American Way across more effectively. As in film, he employed an early form of "edutainment" in episodes like "I'm No Fool With A Bicycle" (1955) and "You - The Human Animal" (1958) to reinforce a way of life that stresses organization and man's superiority to nature, respectively.[61] Further, Disney's packaging of frontier history as consumable "edutainment" enabled him to manipulate the figure of Davy Crockett to such an extent that the line which separates real from fake was erased, at least in the case of one journalism professor who recently shared this childhood memory with his class: "When I was shown a picture of the actual Davy Crockett, I replied 'That's not Fess Parker'" (his emphasis).[62] One more convert, it seems, to Walt's American Way.

We now turn to the last of Disney's mass media products, his beloved amusement parks: Disneyland in Anaheim, California, and its twin sister, the Magic Kingdom portion of Walt Disney World, in Orlando, Florida.[*] For the purposes of our examination, cultural historian Steven Watts has summed it up precisely, stating "If Disney's postwar movies presented vignettes of the American Way of Life, Disneyland [and the Magic Kingdom] erected a monument to it."[63] Within these walls, we find that the promotion of this message is prominent indeed.

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[60] The story behind the FBI segment is especially interesting and is discussed in detail in Eliot, *Walt Disney: Hollywood's Dark Prince*, 238-44; and Smoodin, *Animating Culture*, 162-4.

[61] Holliss and Sibley, *The Disney Studio Story*, 176.

[62] Interview with Dr. Daniel Riffe, E. W. Scripps School of Journalism, Ohio University, 22 January 1996.

[*] Please note: Although the Magic Kingdom did not open until 1971, it was agreed before Walt's death that the park would hew closely to the structure and themes already established at Disneyland in 1955.

Let us begin by considering the walls and the entire structure itself, for the very idea of these parks is, in fact, testimony to the American Way. From their exacting placement of trashcans to their smooth efficiency in moving people about the confines and through the rides, these places reflect this nation's penchant for organization and planning.[64] The widespread benefits of technology are celebrated in various forms like the underground, vacuum-based waste collection system and the convenient, environmentally-friendly Monorail. Finally, with their emphasis on spacious walkways, park benches, and outdoor cafes, the parks encourage the types of public activities that one associates with a close-knit, small-town community.[65] In short, Disney's advocacy of a particular way of life begins with the mere presence of these places.

But Disneyland and the Magic Kingdom promote the American Way by doing much more than just sitting there. Rather, they "create an atmosphere of total theatre," according to cultural historian Margaret King, in which one can taste and smell and touch a variety of sets, literally acting out his or her day in the park.[66] This overwhelming of the senses breaks down a person's ability to discriminate and eventually gives rise to indifference over what is real and what is fake, in effect, turning Walt's realism into our reality.[67]

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[63] Watts, "Walt Disney: Art and Politics in the American Century," 108.

[64] For more on this point, see Fjellman, *Vinyl Leaves*, 185-97; and Alexander Wilson, "Technological Utopias," *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, Winter 1993 (Vol. 92, #1), 157-73.

[65] Margaret J. King, "Disneyland and Walt Disney World: Traditional Values in Futuristic Form," *Journal of Popular Culture*, Summer 1981 (Vol. 15, #1), 122.

[66] *Ibid.*, 127.

Into this malleable mix, Disney poured his selective, "commodified" history which cleansed the past in support of an ideal America. Thus, Main Street in both parks celebrates the small-town community and the free enterprise system, even though the reality of Main Street in 1890 middle America was often a dirty, unpaved, and narrow corridor that displayed both the benefits and costs of capitalism.[68] Similarly, Tomorrowland trumpets the enduring ability of technology to better our lives, while quietly sidestepping its concomitant problems of social disconnection and environmental degradation.[69] Until a recent change in script, an audio-animatronic Abe Lincoln in the Hall of Presidents seemed to champion Walt's anti-Communist message in warning of an "internal threat" to democracy which many feared during the height of the Cold War, but, as columnist Jon Wiener reminds us, few of the park visitors knew or even later realized that "the danger which Lincoln had in mind in that speech . . . was racism."[70] In sum, a classic example of Disney's use of recontextualization to serve the American Way.

Finally, we come to Frontierland, the ultimate in "Distory," as anthropology professor Stephen Fjellman so masterfully puts it. Under Walt's careful direction, this particular "land" became a living testament to the progress inherent in Manifest Destiny and to our forebears' courage in subduing the land and carving a civilization out of nature. As communications professor Michael Real cautions us, however, what escapes consideration or even mention is the "barbaric treatment of American Indians and Mexican-Americans" which too often accompanied this migration.[71] In discussing the essence of Frontierland, anthropologist David Johnson writes:

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[67] The material on this point is voluminous. Especially good sources are Schickel, *The Disney Version*, 325-6; Fjellman, *Vinyl Leaves*, 253-4; David M. Johnson, "Disney World as Structure and Symbol: Re-Creation of the American Experience," *Journal of Popular Culture*, Summer 1981 (Vol. 15, #1), 164; and Shelton Waldrep, "The Contemporary Future of Tomorrow," *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, Winter 1993 (Vol. 92, #1), 141.

[68] See Jon Wiener, "Tall Tales and True," *The Nation*, 31 January 1994, 134; and Richard Francaviglia, "Main Street U.S.A.: The Creation of a Popular Image," *Landscape*, Spring/Summer 1977 (Vol. 21, # 3), 15-7.

[69] Real, *Mass-Mediated Culture*, 56-7.

[70] Jon Wiener, "Disney World Imagineers A President," *The Nation*, 22 November 1993, 622.

> We cannot now experience the Wild West as it was, but we can visit and experience Disney's version of it, so that for visitors, and especially the younger visitors, Disney's version becomes the original version (his emphasis), which is actually more powerful than history since [Disney's] form is concrete, containing "real" people and "lifelike" people with plenty of action and drama by both . . . [a rendition that] is more interesting as well as more easily assimilated and remembered for our "post-literate" generations.[72]

With that comment, we have come full circle in returning to the significance of Walt's three-dimensional parks: using the "edutaining" and overwhelming atmosphere of the "created stage," he has overcome the line between real and fake and crafted, instead, an edited history dedicated to the various elements of the American Way of Life. Moreover, examples of such patriotic messages appear to be quite numerous throughout the parks, just as in the other two mass media we have examined.

In concluding, then, we must first return to the beginning. If you'll recall, it was not this paper's assertion that all of Walt Disney's mass media products between 1941 and 1966 promoted some aspect of the American Way. In fact, there are plenty of instances when the result was just what Disney claimed: an innocent, childhood romp, such as the cartoon *Man's Best Friend* (1952) and the Fantasyland portion of the amusement parks, to name but two. Nor did this study contend that Walt's output contained no themes contradictory of his American vision, for such cases abound, from the "nature over man" of *R'coon Dawg* (1951) to the anti-technology of *The Plastics Inventor* (1944). Rather, what was postulated was that, during the final twenty-six years of Walt's dominion over the Disney empire, a reflection and reinforcement of the American Way of Life would be prominent in his mass media work. Considering all that has been laid out above, this supposition seems warranted.

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[71] Real, *Mass-Mediated Culture*, 61-2.

[72] Johnson, "Disney World as Structure and Symbol," 164.

But it was also maintained that such a message mattered because trends in American society had created a "window of opportunity" through which Disney's stories could enter the cultural mainstream and thus have a significant impact. Some data would be helpful in this regard, and it just so happens that the aforementioned Michael Real, Professor of Communications at the University of California, San Diego, conducted an appropriate survey in 1975.[73] Admittedly, Real's study has its limitations, for the forty-item questionnaire was administered to a small, select group: 192 randomly-selected people who had just finished their visit to Disneyland. Nevertheless, its findings are thought-provoking in light of our earlier discussion regarding enculturation.

Overall, the study appears to support that Walt's American Way message is, indeed, getting through to its audience. In response to the question, "What personal virtues do you think are especially approved in Disney presentations?," many offered words or phrases that read like a checklist for the ideal American: resourcefulness, order, godliness, progress, competition, industriousness, and honesty; and the term

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[73] Real, *Mass-Mediated Culture*, 44-89.

"Americanism", or some variation thereof, appeared so many times that the researchers had to create its own category.[74] Conversely, the vices which the subjects thought Disney frowned upon were, in fact, precisely those that the American Way would not tolerate: idleness, slovenliness, lying, and un-American activities.[75]

Real concluded that "the contrasts between the two [response sets] indicate how clear and unambiguous are Disney lessons on virtues and vices . . . and there was no crossing over. No one mistook for a virtue what someone else thought was presented as a vice, and vice-versa. . . . Respondents knew what Disney presentations approved or disapproved."[76] In short, there seemed to be a building of shared stories and values amongst the audience, as this generally typical reply demonstrated: "Disney has added a fun element, an American institution that binds Americans in a common experience."[77]

Furthermore, the study discovered that, not only was Disney's message getting through, but that it was also being frequently accepted because it "taught values while it entertained," in the words of Real.[78] The respondent who mentioned this "fun element" at the end of the previous paragraph turned out to be just one of many who were grateful for Disney's role in molding their beliefs and for doing so in an entertaining and pleasurable way.[79]

Interestingly, this process of successfully imparting a batch of common stories and values in a fun and rewarding manner bears an uncanny resemblance to Huxley's "social control by carrot" thesis. In addition, commentators as wide-ranging as American literature professor Jane Kuenz, film critic Richard Schickel, and communications researcher Real, have all made a contention similar to that of anthropologist Conrad Kottak: "Through the mass media . . . Disney creations have become powerful elements in the American enculturative system, providing a framework of common expectations, experiences, and behavior that overrides many types of [human] differences."[80]

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[74] *Ibid.*, 73.
[75] *Ibid.*, 74.
[76] *Ibid.*, 73-4.
[77] *Ibid.*, 75.
[78] *Ibid.*, 70.
[79] *Ibid.*, 72-4.

Bearing such access and influence in mind, then, the fact that Walt seems to have used "Huxley-an" methods to prominently promote the message of the American Way in his products gives us much to think about with regard to his impact on this country, both during the last quarter-century of his life and right through to the present day. Perhaps Walt was more perceptive than even he realized when, in response to the suggestion in the early 1960s that he run for mayor of Los Angeles, he asked rhetorically, "Why should I run for mayor when I'm already king?"[81]

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[80] See Jane Kuenz, "It's A Small World After All: Disney and the Pleasures of Identification," *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, Winter 1993 (Vol. 92, #1), 66; Schickel, *The Disney Version*, 360-2; Real, *Mass-Mediated Culture*, 75; and Kottak, "Anthropological Analysis of Mass Enculturation," 74.

[81] As quoted in Schickel, *The Disney Version*, 364.

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Introducing Television to the American Home:

A Dialectic of Structure and Practice in History

Paper submitted to the Qualitative Studies Division,

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Media history: Institutions vs. practice

From an almost common-sensical point of view it is obvious that the phenomenon of television in American culture is multi-dimensional. Therefore, it cannot be fully understood by focussing on the act of viewing or audience activity in general, since this would preclude a consideration of the relation of individualized experiences to larger social norms and structures. Similarly, an exclusive focus on the history and structure of the institutions relevant for broadcasting--such as the major networks or the Federal Communications Commission--would preclude a consideration of the practices that surround television as a cultural phenomenon. However, most studies of television deal with one of its aspects in isolation, that is, only on one of the analytical levels mentioned above. More specifically, media histories have put their emphasis virtually exclusively on an institutional point of view. As O'Sullivan (1991, 60) points out,

> histories of British television tend to be more concerned with the inner workings of the broadcast institutions themselves, the BBC and ITV, their production policies and practices, their early and developing presence in the public world of post-war politics, culture and social affairs.

The same can be said of histories of American television. This understanding of history is described by Fogelson (1989, 135) as positivist history, which he characterizes as follows: It has an attitude of "neutral objectivity" and focusses on documents as evidence that represent historical truth. Events that focus on specific individuals are the focus of history that has a linear progression. Thus, he claims that

> an understanding of non-Western histories requires not only the generation of documents and an expanded conception of what constitutes documentation but also an determined effort to try to comprehend alien [sic] forms of historical consciousness (Fogelson 1989, 134).

While this perception is certainly correct, I want to add that alternative historical techniques and a new conception of the idea of documentation is needed in histories of Western/industrialized countries as well. Fogelson poses a crucial question for my concerns with media history, "who possesses history?" (1989, 142). The postmodern historian Keith Jenkins advocates a related conception of history that is not primarily concerned with major political/institutional events and the reconstruction of the discourses of the ruling class, but instead attempts to construct cultural contexts for historical situations.

Jenkins' central question--"who is history for?(1991, 18)"--thus assumes a central role for historical research. For Jenkins, historical truth and knowledge are never objective, but constructed for someone, that is, a particular group. He sees history as a variety of potentially competing discourses about the world and rejects all-encompassing 'master histories' that give voice to privileged social groups and serve to suppress other histories as alternative discourses. The common emphasis on institutionally centered media history, for example, makes research on non-institutional media production and particularly research on the history of audiences' viewing practices virtually impossible. The silencing of certain aspects of history and significant historical exclusions are thus a predicament that is difficult to avoid.

> There is no history outside [institutional] pressures, any (temporary) consensus only being reached when dominant voices can silence others either by overt power or covert incorporation (Jenkins 1991, 19).

Jenkins' emphasis on the construction of counterhistories and the writing of history as discursive struggle seems to be especially important for media history. Throughout the history of popular culture, the gaps between privileged (elitist) criticism, the media texts 'themselves', and the specific historical viewing practices of the audience seem to be very large. The significant differences between these discourses and the strong privileging of certain discourses makes the writing of alternative histories an important strategy for media researchers.

For this specific purpose the dicipline of ethnohistory, located in the intersections of anthropology and history, can be of some utility, since it offers the opportunity to combine document research on a variety of diverse source materials with anthropological/empirical methods such as archeology, ethnography, and oral history. Or, as Loretta Fowler (1987, 11) puts it:

> "Ethnohistorical method" refers to the process of critically examining and evaluating the evidence provided by written records in light of the insights provided by anthropology.

Similar in its interdisciplinary nature to communication and cultural studies, ethnohistory thus attempts to overcome the epistemological and methodological blind spots of other disciplines.

The introduction of television into American households in the 1940s and 1950s in particular is a significant event in media history that needs to be approached from multiple perspectives. In this essay, I will try to integrate studies of historical documents from an institutional point of view, such as industry publications and popular magazines and accounts that discuss the introduction of television and its role in the household from the audience's perspective, in particular audience ethnographies and oral histories.

The introduction of radio: A historical precedent

The structure of broadcasting as it is in existence now is often taken for granted. The developments that ultimately defined broadcasting as an advertiser-driven enterprise and as oriented toward a domestic family audience are sometimes misunderstood as being natural or unavoidable. The parallels in the development of radio, television and even cable television toward commercial structures are striking. The development of radio is particularly significant in this respect, since it offers an important precedent for the introduction of television. A number of the experiences that the broadcasting industry made in radio were applied directly to television some 15 years later.

In the early years of the development of radio (roughly 1900-1912) a variety of utopian discourses were generated in the discussion of the technology. However, the shape that the technology would actually take was largely unclear. Marconi in particular (unsuccessfully) tried to shape radio according to the model of the telegraph. Instead, Americans were fascinated by radio because it offered them the opportunity to interact with a wide variety of people over large distances (Douglas, 1986, 40). Radio offered the promise to connect people on a whole continent. At the same time businesses--Western Union and Bell in particular--were skeptical of radio because it did not offer any privacy.

Nevertheless, radio developed as hobby for male teenagers and men who constructed their own sets and organized clubs for radio users. From this subculture, a whole "grassroots, coast-to-coast communication network" (Douglas 1986, 50) developed. However, because of the intervention of both military and business interests, amateur use of the spectrum space was radically cut back. The spectrum space was redefined from being the property of 'the people' to being the property of the military and of businesses. Radio was redefined as a commercial broadcast medium in the late 1910s and 1920s and commercial operators started to establish new broadcast content and programming practices.

As Smulyan (1994) points out, broadcasters in early commercial radio and individuals working in the industry had to make a combined effort to persuade or convince advertisers to pay some attention to radio as an advertising medium. NBC in particular used a variety of promotional materials to convince advertisers of radio's potential usefulness for them. After this was accomplished, a further advertising interest in the predominantly female daytime audience was encouraged as a second step. Programs were redesigned to allow distracted listening by women doing their housework and the inclusion of radio sets into the home as furniture (instead of technological toys for boys and men) made female acceptance of radio easier. At the same time, the--potentially--constant presence of the medium in the private sphere of the home made radio attractive for advertisers as a medium for domestic consumption. Thus, after some initial reluctance by the advertisers, women were increasingly addressed as the prime consumers in the home environment.

> Promoters of broadcast advertising turned radio from a boy's toy and a male-controlled entertainment medium into an instructional tool staffed by home economists in order to enter the home during the day and sell to women. (Smulyan 1994, 304)

Indirect advertising utilized home economists and other 'experts' to present commercial messages as useful information for the housewife. The intrusion of advertising and the ideology of consumption thus became less obvious. Finally, the introduction of radio soap operas as a next step increased the number of formats and the amount of commercial time available in daytime radio programming.

By the early 1930s, both the commercial structure of radio broadcasting and the focus on a home/family audience were well established. The system proved to be fairly profitable and thus served as a convenient primer for the development of future media, television in particular. Additionally, radio apparently also attempted to define gender relations in a specific way. Women as a primary audience during daytime were thus expected to stay home and do housework, supervise children etc..

What is interesting in the historical accounts of the development of radio is that there is some consideration of people's activities/practices as long as the medium is not institutionally dominated. However, as soon as the commercial broadcast system is in place, any consideration of audience practices disappears. It seems unlikely that the introduction of the new medium into American homes did not generate problems and conflicts. The gender-specific programming mentioned above indicates that radio program designers, i.e. networks and advertisers were interested in influencing family structures and consumption behaviors. The two central historical works discussed here (and other works as well) are not able to account for the lived experiences of audience members in general and the changes in family structures that radio tried to bring about in particular. Accordingly, these works have a strong institutional emphasis that does not leave enough space for competing or alternative histories.

Invading the home: The establishment of television

Even more clearly than in the case of radio, television historians point out that through the introduction of television institutions also tried to elicit a certain amount of social change. Concluding from industry reports and trade publications, Williams claims that television was "being looked for and developed with certain purposes and practices already in mind" (1974, 8). The introduction of television in the U.S. coincided with the postwar move to suburban areas, in particular to single family homes, and with an increasing emphasis on the nuclear family. Thus, television first enters the American home on a large scale in a situation when American society became to some extend disconnected from large urban social centers.

> The key social tendencies which had led to the definition of broadcasting were by then [early 1950s] even more pronounced. There was significantly higher investment in the privatised home, and the social and physical distance between these homes and the decisive political and productive centres of society had become much greater (Williams 1974, 23).

The emphasis of television's transmission into the individual household thus coincided with larger social policies and trends. At the same time, the audience for broadcast television (and radio) was always conceptualized as a large aggregate, a *mass audience*. This notion presupposes a certain degree of uniformity in the audience. It again imposes a institutional perspective that is neither interested in nor supportive of unexpected audience viewing behaviors. Nevertheless, the historical perspective that Williams takes up enables us to understand the insertion of television into other, larger social developments and the operation of institutional strategies.

Lynn Spigel (1992) illustrates the industry strategies in the establishment of television further by looking at popular magazines such as *Better Homes and Gardens* or *McCalls* from the late 1940s to the mid-1950s. Advertisements for television sets and articles on interior design in relation to television both provide an important framework for the actual installation and placement of new television sets in the home. Again, these institutional discourses were extremely careful to incorporate television conveniently into existing ideological positions. In particular, television advertisements tried to incorporate existing idealized gender roles (father is working, mother is a housewife, they have two children) and they portrayed the nuclear family as a primary social unit that would be further united by watching television.

> Television was supposed to bring the family together but still allow for social and sexual divisions in the home. In fact, the attempt to maintain a balance between these two ideals was a central tension at work in popular discourses on television and the family (Spigel 1992, 37).

My own research in popular magazines of the period indicates that early ads for television sets still attempted to negotiate the appropriate place for television in the home. They emphasize the television sets' role as furniture ('beautifully designed cabinets'; 'hand-rubbed woods'), its easy integration into the existing living room furnishings and its positive social status. Many sets were built as cabinets, so that the technology itself could easily be hidden and the educational/high culture appeal of television programs was foregrounded as well. It seems reasonable to assume that in this phase television still needed to be familiarized for most consumers, so that a new set did not seem too alien in the family home. Around 1950 a change in the advertising strategies occurs: The television set itself is foregrounded more and is not concealed. The appeal of the television set for all family members is emphasized. Television then becomes the new center of family life; it has been incorporated into the family home. Nevertheless, Spigel points to the fact that advertisements did not reflect social reality, but rather predicted or even formed the future adoption of television.

> The magazines included television as a staple home fixture before most Americans could even receive a television signal, much less consider purchasing the expensive item. The media discourses did not so much reflect social reality; instead they preceded it (Spigel 1992, 39).

While the penetration rates of television sets in American households did not reach 50% until 1953, the advertisements still seem to reflect a change in public attitude toward television. It apparently had moved from the status of an alien object in the household to a regular and central part of American family life.

While most works on the introduction of television still have an official or institutional focus, they come considerably closer to the practices of actual audience members. Since advertisements to some extent need to reflect the tastes and preferences of consumers they are much less imposing patterns of media use on the audience. Nevertheless, they certainly do represent desirable lifestyles and behaviors from the perspective of the television industry.

The relation of the institutional definition of communication technologies to its appropriation in the household is the focus of some recent ethnographic research by Silverstone, Hirsch & Morley (1992). Their concept of the *moral economy* of the household is centrally concerned with how a commodity is bought and incorporated into a household and how it is converted to suit the family's household routines or individual practices. It is thus assumed that communication technologies can be and are regularly converted in their daily use, while institutional discourses attempt to define appropriate uses.

> Consumption practices are working in, through (and occasionally against) the powerful discourses of design, marketing, advertising and education, which have constructed the dominant definitions of these technologies and their 'appropriate' uses (Silverstone, R., Hirsch, E., & Morley, D., 1992, 15-27).

This illustrates Sahlins' (1981) more general remarks on the relation of structure and change in society. While human actions--including the use of technologies--emerge from a specific structure and attempt to reproduce this structure, there is no determining relationship between structure and practice and it is possible that "what began as reproduction ends as transformation (Sahlins 1981, 67)."

In terms of the introduction of television, this still leaves open the question of the power balance between the social and industrial structures and the practices of actual television audiences. While there is some understanding of the institutional forces in the introduction of television, it remains unclear whether and how these forces are effective in a specific social context. The historical approaches discussed in the next section attempt to solve this problem.

Oral history as alternative history

Thompson (1988) is one of the historians who directly addresses the problem of accessing historical sources for groups that are not the focus of political or administrative institutions. He points out that

> the more personal, local, and unofficial a document, the less likely it was to survive. The very power structure worked as a great recording machine shaping the past in its own image (Thompson 1988, 3).

He is confident that through the use of oral history communities can be given their own historical voice. Fogelson (1988, 136) agrees that oral history can aid significantly in the interpretation of written documents. While I would argue that it is dangerous to assume that through the use of oral history all power relations that are usually involved in the writing of history will disappear, I certainly agree that oral history is a very attractive way of approaching the lived experiences of historical groups or subcultures that are usually very difficult to access.

Two media historians have recently approached historical radio and television audiences from this perspective. O'Sullivan notes that there are still no accounts of "how television viewing cultures became established" (1991, 159) from the audience's point of view. He conducted interviews about this experience with people who were in their twenties at the time of the introduction of television. One of his main findings is that after the acquisition of the set, television has initially treated as a spectacle, valued for its novelty. However, this attitude changed rapidly as television became valued as a status symbol, for its educational and entertainment value, and as a new center of family interaction. More significantly, television also caused a rearrangement of the space of the family home and of the structure of leisure time activities. What remains unclear from O'Sullivan's account is how the technology as it was institutionally defined was actually appropriated by the audience, that is, how structure and practice were related in this instance.

Moores (1988, 30-31) in his oral history of the introduction of radio in Britain observes similar developments:

> It is clear from the interviews that radio signified something quite different for men and women. For him, the wireless was a 'craze', a 'miraculous toy'; for her it was an ugly box and an imposed silence [since men had to listen with a headset]. ... But women's relationship to radio was to go through a transformation which would re-position them at the centre of the broadcasting audience.

Interestingly, Moores also replicates some of the findings of the institutionally oriented histories of Douglas (1986, 1987) and Smulyan (1993, 1994). His oral history also comes to the conclusion that radio first had to be inserted into the living room and familiarized as a piece of furniture before specific programming could redefine family structures and leisure activities around radio.

It seems very significant that all major historical accounts of the introduction of radio or television into the household came to similar conclusions: The institutional forces at work in the introduction of new media were able to familiarize the technologies and subsequently advanced the restructuring of household activities. However, the two exploratory oral histories that are available so far very likely do not offer sufficient evidence for a clear determining relationship between institutions and audiences. As Silverstone et al.'s (1992) more conceptual research makes clear, people's relationships to new technologies are more complex than either institutional or oral/alternative histories can account for right now.

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Constructing the Nuclear-waste Discourse: An Analysis of Coverage in Four Minnesota Newspapers of the Prairie Island Controversy

Paper presented to the AEJMC
Qualitative Studies Division
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Introduction

This study asks, from the critical perspective, How was nuclear power signified in newspaper discourses about one recent nuclear waste-storage controversy? The case used is Northern States Power Company's ultimately successful campaign for a Special Use Permit to store spent nuclear fuel in above-ground metal casks at its Prairie Island plant 30 miles south of the Twin Cities, near Red Wing, Minnesota. [1]

The decision to grant NSP's request was made by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission in June 1992 and was later confirmed by the Minnesota Legislature. PUC chairwoman Norma McKanna said the decision is "probably the most important decision" that the Commission has ever had to make (Red Wing Republican Eagle, 5/25/1991).

The Prairie Island plant, housing two reactors, generates 20 percent of NSP's total capacity and according to NSP is the utility's most profitable operation. The plant shares a small island with the Mdewakanton Band of Sioux Indians (Prairie Island Dakota), whose primary source of income is its Treasure Island Casino, also located on the island.

The symbolic power of nuclear fission

Perhaps better than any other modern global issue, nuclear power symbolizes human ambivalence toward technology -- it represents simultaneously humanity's deepest suspicions about technology as well as its faith that human rational intelligence will ultimately prevail over the awesome forces of nature.

William Gamson and Andre Modigliani have pointed out that the culture of nuclear power was indelibly signified in terrifying terms with the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. "Public awareness begins with the images of sudden, enormous destruction, symbolized in the rising mushroom cloud of a nuclear bomb blast. Even when discourse focuses on the use of nuclear reactors to produce electricity, the afterimage of the bomb is never far from the surface." [2]

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[1] The PUC recommended in June 1992 that NSP be granted the permit. The issue then moved on to the state legislature, which in June 1993 also voted in favor of NSP's request. The analysis includes newspaper articles published through PUC's June 1992 decision.

Fifty years after the Nagasaki and Hiroshima bombings, nuclear fission contines to be richly signified in American culture. Signifiers appear in film, music, literature and politics, as well as the media. Its appearance on the world stage has added new terms to the American lexicon -- *China syndrome, meltdown, ground zero, nuclear winter, mushroom cloud.* Films ranging from the mainstream (*The China Syndrome; Silkwood; Dr. Strangelove; Broken Arrow*) to the alternative (*The Atomic Cafe*) take nuclear power as their central theme. With its unimaginable destructive power as well as its giddying potential, it serves as an analogy for modernity. It symbolizes, simultaneously, the American Dream and Frankenstein.

The focus of the nuclear debate recently has shifted away from the relative benefits and dangers of nuclear power to the question of what to do with the radioactive garbage being generated by the nation's reactors. This reflects the urgency of the situation. Time magazine (1/8/96) reports that in three years 23 of the nation's 112 nuclear plants will have reached capacity; by 2010 about half will have run out of on-site storage space. Meanwhile the federal government, required by law to take charge of all nuclear waste by 1998, has no real prospects for a site. Thus there are two major dimensions of the situation, both reflected in the media discourse about nuclear waste -- a race against the clock to find some place to put it; and efforts by communities to make sure that some place is somewhere else.

Signs and signification

This study focuses on encoding, seen as a social/political practice, designed to promote certain meanings while marginalizing others. Within encoding, signification denotes the ideologically-driven process by which media construct meanings dependent on "the balance of forces in a particular historical conjuncture: on the 'politics of signification.'" [3] In this "politics of signification," reality does not propose its own meaning; rather, through selecting and combining elements during encoding, language and symbolization systematically produce a certain range of meanings around events.

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[2] Gamson, W. and A. Modigliani. "Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach." 1989. *American Journal of Sociology.* Vol. 95 No. 1 (July). 1-36:12.

Hall argues against a sort of culturalist determinism which overlooks situational variation in the encoding process. Message encoders operate within a *range* of possibilities, just as audiences, while incorporating the privileged position of dominant definitions, also negotiate their local realities into the interpretation. Thus, according to Hall, message encoding is constructed nondeterministically within a discursive context. Encoding is "overdetermined" by a range of influences, including the discourses of the medium, newsroom and reporting conventions, deadlines, and technological constraints. [4] The view of society adopted here sees a tangled web of individuals, groups, classes, interest groups, families, political parties, etc. and mandates a contextual approach to analyzing the encoding process.
In this view, nothing happens in a vacuum, including media practice.

The power of signification lies in what Hall calls its "invisibleness;" the encoding process must go undetected in order for certain meanings to appear natural and inevitable. [5] In its signifying function the newspaper text stands in for reality, for readers who cannot obtain first-hand knowledge of a subject.

The signifying function is particularly powerful and invisible when the subject is as complex as nuclear science. Conveying the dominant code, media signify nuclear power as safe, clean and benign through signifiers provided by scientific experts in the industry and their agents in the government. Because scientific knowledge is reserved for a group of elites, the dominant encoding may be especially invisible in nuclear-waste discourses, because so few people have the tools needed to bring oppositional readings to the messages.

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3 Hall, Stuart. "The rediscovery of 'ideology': return of the repressed in media studies." in Gurevitch, Bennett, Curran and Woollacott, eds. 1982. *Culture, Society and the Media*. London: Routledge. 70.

4 Hall, Stuart. 1980. "Encoding/Decoding." in *Culture, Media, Language*, ed. Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe, and Paul Willis. London: Hutchinson.

5 Hall, S. 1982, op. cit., 75.

This invisible process of signification relies on audiences' perception that media are independent of powerful agents. Yet, as Hall points out, media's ability to function in the service of hegemony requires that they operate "within the boundaries of consensus" even while they help manufacture that consensus. Thus media are constrained to present definitions which fit the achieved consensus. In other words, in discourse about nuclear power, media must reinforce a range of widely shared, received notions as to what nuclear power means.

The current study examines newspaper discourse as the product by which newspapers helped to manufacture consensus around a constricted range of meanings for events leading to the decision to allow NSP to store spent fuel at Prairie Island.

A Constructionist Approach to Discourse Analysis

"Constructionist" as it is used here is comprised of two meanings: First, it conveys a focus on news as a social construction; second, it refers to an interpretivist approach which seeks to pose an alternative to falsely binary conceptualizations of discourse readings. That is, it seeks to illuminate ambivalence. Building on Philip Converse's 1964 warning to the same effect [6], Gamson and Modigliani argue that methodological tradition has favored analyses that "impose elite dichotomies on a mass public whose beliefs are not organized by such dimensions."[7] That statement was made about decoding; in the belief that that it applies as well to encoding, this paper attempts to illuminate ambivalences in its analysis of the construction of the nuclear-waste discourse.

In their 1989 article on which the current paper is based, Gamson and Modigliani identify several *interpretive packages* which have characterized public discourse on the topic to date. At the core of the *package* is the *issue*

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[6] Converse, P.E. 1964. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Pubics." In Apter, D.E., ed., *Ideology and Discontent*. New York: Free Press. 206-261.

[7] Gamson and Modigliani, op. cit. 36.

frame; it suggests what is at issue and lays out a range of positions on the topic, "allowing for a degree of controversy among those who share a common frame." [8]

Packages have *careers* which develop over time; it is in their careers that their relationships to social structures are revealed. If they are to remain viable, packages "have the task of constructing meaning over time, incorporating new events into their interpretive frames." [9]

Gamson and Modigliani's schema attempts to address why the careers of some packages are more successful than others. The authors pose the notion of *issue cultures* which combine to determine package careers. Issue cultures are comprised of *cultural resonances, sponsor activities,* and *media practices. Cultural resonances* refers to how symbols signifying a specific issue connect with more enduring cultural themes. *Sponsor activities* refers to the deliberate, often sophisticated advocacy work of organizations, which often employ professionals who communicate well with journalists.

Gamson and Modigliani's constructionist approach encompasses the tangled reality of interacting encoders and decoders, rather than attempting to reduce their interaction to neat formulations well suited to analytical parlance but bearing little resemblence to the real world. The bulk of research concerning media coverage of the environment, such as agenda-setting, tries to fit the complexity of social construction of issues into a one-way transmission model of communication. While solid research in the past has demonstrated diffusion of scientific information from the scientific elite through the media to the general public, the social construction of environmental issues must now move beyond diffusion to encompass the complex interactions among sponsors, their social contexts and the media. As Krimsky and Plough argue in their examination of the flow of risk information about the environment, "Moreover, our analysis suggests that risk communications in their social context resemble tangled webs, in contrast to a parallel series of sender/receiver interactions." 10

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[8] Gamson and Modigliani, op. cit. 3.

[9] Gamson and Modigliani, op. cit. 4.

In summary, in Gamson and Modigliani's constructionist approach, media discourses are expressed as packages comprised of issue frames, and are situated within larger issue cultures; media practices interact with other elements of these issue cultures.

This paper attempts to build on Gamson and Modigliani's examination of discourses from 1945 to 1985 by extending the approach to newspaper articles concerning what is seen here as the latest phase in the controversy -- the nuclear waste-disposal issue. [11]

Interpretive Packages and Cultural Resonances

Gamson and Modigliani identified seven nuclear-power discourse packages in their survey of 1945-1985 coverage of the issue on television, in opinion columns, cartoons and news magazines. [12] Their anlaysis showed a clear dualism between starkly pro- and anti-nuclear positions until the 1979 accident at the Three Mile Island reactor in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Since then, starkly pro- and anti-nuclear packages have conflated into ambivalence, they argue.

Packages are identified in the current analysis in terms of this anti- and pro-nuclear dualism, but also in terms of what is seen as the continued trend toward ambivalence. Packages are considered also in terms of whether they fall within the range of definitions dictated by the dominant ideology.

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10 Krimsky, S. and A. Plough. 1988. *Environmental Hazards: Communicating Risks as a Social Process*. Dover, MA: Auburn House. 298

11 Gamson and Modigliani's discussion analyzed discourses in four media channels: television news; news magazines; editorial cartoons; and syndicated opinion columns.

12 The authors named the packages ***Progress, Energy Independence, Soft Paths, Public Accountability, Not Cost Effective, Devil's Bargain***, and ***Runaway***.

Six packages are identified. Five new packages are seen as emerging in Minnesota newspaper coverage of the Prairie Island waste-storage discourse: ***NIMBY (Not In My Backyard); Unsafe at Any Speed; Environmental Racism*; *Alternatives*;** and ***Economic Stability***. 4

There follows a brief definition of each package identified in the current analysis:

Progress*:** "Nuclear power is a net benefit to society. Technology can and will prevent nuclear waste from harming anyone." This package asserts that nuclear power is safe, despite the anti-nuclear doomsayers who would scare us into believing otherwise. This position very often is sponsored by representatives of government and private bureaucracies such as utilities' fiduciaries and sponsors representing commercial interests connected to nuclear power. Because the government has pursued nuclear energy despite the protests of citizens, ***Progress can be considered a preferred signification of nuclear power; as it has done since the beginning of the nuclear age [13] ***Progress*** continues to dominate the struggle to define nuclear power, at least in the mainstream media.

Gamson and Modigliani argue that a dualism between "atoms for peace" or "atoms for war" was at the core of the ***Progress*** package from 1945 to 1985. By dominating the nuclear debate for 40 years, this (false, according to the constructionist approach employed by Gamson and Modigliani and in the current analysis) dichotomy silenced discussions of alternatives, as well as safety concerns among nuclear power supporters. The war-peace dualism has become less powerful since the end of the Cold War; lacking anti-Communism, ***Progress*** has yet to find a replacement mission with which to associate itself.

***NIMBY (Not in My Backyard)*:** "We should not have to live near dangerous materials. Put them somewhere else." NIMBY does not necessarily resonate with explicitly anti- or pro-nuclear sponsors, but rather with anti-big government, anti-big city cultural values. *NIMBY* sponsors argue that the "temporary" Prairie Island site could become permanent, given the federal government's failure to find a national storage site. *NIMBY* signifies nuclear waste as a threat to local self-determination, and to the quality of life in Minnesota. People with radically different lifestyles and political beliefs have joined together as *NIMBY* sponsors to keep out development which they agree is undesirable, even if they disagree on everything else. Resisting nuclear waste dumps is no exception. Thus, *NIMBY* is not seen as anti-nuclear but as ambivalent.

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[13] Gamson and Modigliani found that its hegemony was broken in 1979 with the Three Mile Island accident. However, no package has become dominant in its place. Rather, some ***Progress*** sponsors began to promote ambivalent packages.

Economic Stability: A pro-nuclear package which has survived the transition to the current phase by tailoring itself to the waste-storage issue is the previous ***Energy Independence*** package, which evolved into ***Economic Stability***: "It is in the public's interest to protect the profitability of the nuclear power industry despite the waste-storage problem, because it provides cheap energy, high-paying jobs, and profits to NSP stockholders."

This package signifies a community cheerleading role for the biggest bucks in town. It implies that "What is good for NSP is good for Red Wing/Minnesota" because the utility provides approximately 70 percent of the city's tax base, and many jobs in the state.

Anti-nuclear groups sponsored three packages, ***Unsafe at Any Speed***, ***Environmental Racism***, and ***Alternatives***. ***Unsafe at Any Speed***, evolved from the previous ***Public Accountability*** package, is a Frankenstein argument, signifying nuclear power as technological terror brought about by greedy corporations. ***Unsafe at Any Speed*** argues: "Despite the nuclear industry's efforts to convince the public otherwise, the facts have shown that nuclear power is dangerous and harmful. There is no convincing evidence that it can be safely controlled."

Unsafe evolved from the earlier ***Runaway***, but qualifies as a challenger rather than ambivalent package, primarily because of the environmental principles at its core. As Gamson and Modigliani put it, ***Runaway*** "suggests resignation and fatalism more than opposition. 'Grin and bear it' is more the message than 'No nukes.' "[14] *Unsafe* resonates with the anti-nuclear issue culture, but it should be noted that its sponsors form an eclectic alliance rather than a unified interest group. Interpreters from all political persuasions, from libertarian to socialist, have questioned the safety of nuclear power.

A second anti-nuclear package to emerge with the advent of the waste-storage discourse is ***Environmental Racism***. It argues: "NSP has chosen Prairie Island for a storage dump because the Native Americans who live there are thought to be too poor and too weak to resist." A more general version of this idea is: "It is the least powerful, poorest people in society who are forced to accept the harmful byproducts of corporate America's quest for profits." Signified as ***Environmental Racism***, nuclear power stands for economic injustice, and further, for the entanglement of environmental degradation, racism and unrestrained capitalism. ***Environmental Racism*** is oppositional in the discourse because it resonates with overlapping issue cultures encompassing economic justice and because it challenges certain attitudes toward nature, such as manifest destiny, which underlie Western culture.

Finally, the ***Alternatives*** package resonates with anti-nuclear sponsors who signify nuclear power as unnecessary. This package argues that utilities such as NSP should be forced to turn away from nuclear power and exploit safe alternatives including conservation, wind, solar and biomass energy sources. Embedded in this code is the argument that NSP should be accountable to a constituency encompassing more than just its stockholders.

Method

The analysis began with a close reading by the author of all 119 articles as a continuous narrative to reveal broad outlines of how the issue is signified in the six packages.

Next, statements expressing the six packages were counted and their frequency noted. The unit of analysis is individual statements expressing interpretive packages. In many cases a package is expressed in more than one way by more than one source within the same article; every statement that

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14 Gamson and Modigliani. op. cit. 20.

carried the essence of a package was counted.[15] The data set, then, consists of 385 statements of six interpretive packages, culled from 119 articles in four newspapers.[16] Next, the author re-read the narrative, noting examples of each package. In addition, the interpretation draws to a limited extent on interviews which the author conducted with the journalists who produced the majority of the articles in the sample.[17]

The sample includes all 119 news articles published in four Minnesota newspapers in the first distinct phase of the Prairie Island controversy, March 1991 to June 1992. The papers include the Star Tribune of the Twin Cities, St. Paul Pioneer Press, Red Wing Republican Eagle, and The Circle.

This purposive sample includes newspapers in all three niches that would have provided consistent coverage of the issue: the state's two metropolitan dailies that handle statewide stories; local press in the community where the story happened; and a small advocacy press aimed at Native Americans. The objective was to include all the state's newspapers that would have covered the story with more than an occasional story. The time frame incorporates the first definable "phase" of public discourse.[18]

Star Tribune articles (N=21) were identified through a keyword search of the newspaper's CD-ROM index; Pioneer Press stories (N=24) through a manual search of its index; the Republican Eagle sample (N=66) consists of the entire

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15 This was done by the author and two other coders. The author intercoded 5 percent of the sample that had been coded by others.

16 Only slight disagreement was found between the interpretations; in cases where interpretations differed, the statement was discussed and the disagreement resolved. In two cases the author and the other coder could not agree; the statements were not included.

17 Interviewed were Ruth Denny, editor of The Circle at the time these articles were written; Jeff Armstrong, freelance reporter for The Circle who wrote most of the items in that subsample; Charles Laszewski, environmental reporter for the St. Paul Pioneer Press; and Juliana Thill, NSP reporter for the Red Wing Republican Eagle at that time.

18 The time period for The Circle (January 1991 - January 1993) reflects its monthly publication schedule and approach to the topic. The Circle published eight lengthy feature articles on the topic in that time period.

contents of the reporter's clip file for that period; and The Circle stories (N=8) were identified by manually examining issues of that paper.

Sample

Star Tribune	N= 21	3/22/91 - 6/27/92
Pioneer Press	N= 24	4/19/91 - 6/27/92
Republican Eagle	N= 66	3/22/91 - 6/27/92
The Circle	N= 8	Jan 1991 - Jan 1993
Total	N=119	

Findings and Discussion

Interpretively, it was found that in the three dailies, concerns about nuclear waste are packaged as specific complaints which can be resolved without disturbing the system's commitment to the nuclear industry. Often this is accomplished by naming an external source of the problem, usually the federal government. Bureaucratic authority is symbolically conferred on nuclear power employees, while protesters are defined in terms of their outsideness; and "Native American concerns" are generalized.

The analysis yielded four insights based on the distribution of packages:

First, the distribution of packages among the three dailies shows that *Alternatives* represents the largest percentage, on average, of any single package (23 percent). However, when the entire sample is considered, The Circle and the Republican Eagle, despite their editorially opposed positions, each devotes a far smaller percentage of package statements to *Alternatives* (8 and 11 percent, respectively) than either of the metro dailies (34 percent and 23 percent).

Second, distinctly pro-and anti-nuclear power packages dominate the current discourse (combined 39 percent of all package statements), with a differentiation of anti-nuclear packages. Of 385 statements, 84 are staunchly pro-nuclear (***Progress***), while 81 express ***Unsafe***, the historically established anti-nuclear argument. Differentiation among anti-nuclear sponsors is expressed in ***Environmental Racism*** (91 statements) and ***Alternatives*** (67 statements), for a combined 41 percent of all statements.

Third, ambivalence regarding the wisdom or folly of nuclear power plants is emerging as a strong presence, as evidenced by ***NIMBY***, which appears as 62 statements (16 percent).

Fourth, the only non-profit, non-daily paper in the sample is also the only consistently oppositional voice. Using package frequency as an indicator, two-thirds of The Circle's narrative signifies the issue as ***Environmental Racism***. The Circle uses almost no ***Progress*** statements and no ***Economic Stability*** signifiers. It is an indicator of The Circle's oppositional, outsider status that it displays almost no ***NIMBY*** signifiers, despite the fact that the waste is being dumped next to a Native American reservation.

Five packages appear with roughly equal frequency, with the one exception that ***Economic Stability*** occurs much less frequently than any other package. There is significant variation among newspapers. Tables 1 and 2 show frequencies of interpretive packages and proportion of total packages devoted to each package by newspaper, respectively.

1. Interpretive Packages: Frequency in Four Papers

Newspaper	*Progress*	*Unsafe*	*Environ Racism*	*Econ Stab*	*NIMBY*	*Alt*
RW (N=66)	39	40	33	9	29	18
PP (N=24)	12	9	11	1	16	25
Strib(N=21)	14	21	7	6	16	19
Subtotals	65	70	51	16	61	62
Circ(N=8)	3	11	40*	0	1	5
Totals	68	81	91	16	62	67

*Nuclear waste storage was signified as *Environmental Racism* 22 times in one article in The Circle.

2. Distribution of Packages in Each Paper by Percentage

Paper/Tot pkgs	Prog	Unsafe	ER	ES	NIMBY	Altern
RW/168	23%	24%	20%	5%	17%	11%
PiPress/74	16%	12%	15%	1%	22%	34%
Strib/83	17%	26%	9%	6%	20%	23%
Circle/60	5%	18%	67%	0%	2%	8%

Discussion of interpretive packages

NIMBY

NIMBY ("We should not have to live near dangerous waste. Put it somewhere else.")

NIMBY is exemplified by an article in the Pioneer Press (8/16/91) pegged to Minnesota Public Service Commissioner Kris Sanda's announcement that she feared granting NSP's request because the storage might turn into a permanent dump, given the federal government's failure to find a national storage site. The headline articulates the *NIMBY* perspective: "State may be stuck with nuclear waste." The article contains five *NIMBY* statements; *NIMBY* is the only package to appear before the jump (the story led the metro section). "I'm going to ring the bell and I'll ring the bell as long and as hard as need be because we're in deep weeds in Minnesota," Sanda is quoted as saying.

This example illustrates *NIMBY*'s independence from the anti-nuclear issue culture. Sanda is reported to be an avowed supporter of nuclear energy [19]; her concern has nothing to do with questioning the safety or efficiency of nuclear power. Rather, it resonates with Minnesotans' fear of having to live with the nation's waste. Thus the issue is clearly signified as a problem that the state must keep out of its "back yard" but not as a challenge to nuclear power itself.

Thus it is not surprising that Sanda employs a diversion tactic by blaming the problem on an outside entity -- the federal government. By reacting vigorously to the possibility of Minnesota electric consumers paying for the Prairie Island storage when they have already paid the federal government $183 million toward the search for a national repository, *NIMBY* sponsors invoke the power of the public pocketbook, define the problem purely as a storage crunch, with the implication that a reasonable solution can coexist alongside nuclear power, and blame the problem squarely on an external entity.

A key NSP voice in the Prairie Island discourse was Tom Bushee, the company's nuclear-power spokesman. He articulated the *NIMBY* position from a pro-nuclear perspective in a July 17, 1991 Republican Eagle article.

> "Nobody wants a waste facility in their back yard. It's not just nuclear waste, it includes landfills and chemical waste," Bushee said. "To find a site is a challenge to anyone. Society produces it and in one sense does not want to deal with it at the end of the cycle."

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[19] The Republican Eagle referred to Sanda as "an Independent-Republican who supports nuclear power" and wrote that she is "an unlikely source for such alarm." (8/16/91)

By attempting to portray nuclear power as something unpleasant but normal, Bushee's language indirectly acknowledges the issue culture built around society's fear. Corner, Richardson and Fenton identified this tactic in pro-nuclear television narratives in Britain. "The technology is rhetorically retrieved from being an alien industrial process into being 'part of our daily life.'"[20]

The Prairie Island Dakota tribe's spokespeople often conflate ***NIMBY, Unsafe*** and ***Environmental Racism*** into one statement, as in this quote attributed to Kurt BlueDog, lawyer for the Tribe: "It is time to stop skirting the health issues by playing with numbers on risk assessments. These Indian people have to live right next door to the nuclear dump." (Republican Eagle, 6/14/91). Thus the activities and agendas of ***NIMBY*** and ***Unsafe*** sponsors overlap, suggesting that, indeed, there is a "tangled web" of package sponsors.

Economic Stability

Economic Stability: ("It is in the public's interest to protect the profitability of the nuclear power industry despite the waste-storage problem, because it provides cheap energy, high-paying jobs, and profits to NSP stockholders.")

The most striking aspect of this package in this analysis is its low frequency. The infrequency of ***Economic Stability*** in the Red Wing paper is especially surprising, given the utlility's dominant economic presence in that community. However, NSP invoked ***Economic Stability*** during a key moment, when it made its case to the Public Utilities Commission during the culminating moment in June 1992. The Republican Eagle's article reflects the strategy in its lead:

> "An attorney for Northern States Power Co. today warned state legislators that rejection of the utility's plan to store spent nuclear fuel at its Prairie Island power plant would jeopardize the state's energy supply and its economic future." (6/24/92)

The package appears four times in the article, making up the utility's entire focus. The article goes on to relay NSP's warning that denial of the request would drive up the cost of energy and would "threaten future economic development throughout the state."

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[20] Corner, Richardson and Fenton. op. cit. 114.

In Gamson and Modigliani's schema, cultural themes connect packages to the larger issue cultures which nourish them. But culture requires not only themes but also counterthemes; it is the dialectic tension between them which makes society and culture possible.

Although it is surprising that pro-nuclear sponsors invoked ***Economic Stability*** so infrequently, the analysis did reveal that anti-nuclear sponsors went to significant lengths to refute it by invoking its countertheme. In the current analysis, that countertheme is Gamson and Modigliani's previous ***Public Accountability*** package, which has been fragmented among the various issue cultures which have sprung up to oppose nuclear power. ***Public Accountability*** is diffused throughout the current discourse, reflected in ***Environmental Racism, Unsafe and Alternatives.*** Each of the latter three packages resonates with a larger corporate responsibility theme, thus expressing ***Economic Stability's*** counter-argument.

If ***Economic Stability***'s counter-argument is expressed so frequently in this discourse, why is the argument itself so rare? One might begin to solve the mystery by invoking Stuart Hall's point that signification must remain invisible if it is to serve the interests of hegemony. The authority of the government is thoroughly encoded in the dominant significations; it is so well embedded that it is no longer visible. It has become naturalized. Pro-nuclear sponsors become "officials," "experts" or "representatives," while anti-nuclear package sponsors are defined in terms of their outsideness: "opponents" or "protesters."

Given their entrenched position at the top of the power structure, and given the array of forces lined up to oppose them, it would not make sense for pro-nuclear sponsors to make a target of their own authority by calling attention to their economic power in the media. It was necessary for NSP to try to position itself "on the side of the public" by signifying the waste as everyone's problem, and by playing up the hardships the controversy was causing the company, and, by extension, ratepayers.

From NSP's perspective, the ideal discourse concerning the waste storage would have been no discourse at all. What made the Prairie Island controversy newsworthy was not the government's granting of NSP's requests, but the opposition stimulated by its requests. Announcements by the Tribe and environmental groups in March 1991 that they intended to fight NSP's plan brought the EIS approval process into the limelight. The Star Tribune's first article dealing with Prairie Island (March 22, 1991) made it clear that the Tribe's objections were bringing NSP's plan into the news. The lead reads: "The Sioux Indian community on Prairie Island is challenging plans by Northern States Power Co. (NSP) to double the amount of high-level radioactive waste stored at its nuclear power plant on the island."

The Republican Eagle's first three articles all are framed in terms of objections to the plan, as indicated by the headlines: "Tribe says NSP must stop work"; "NSP storage plan for nuclear waste concerns Indians"; and "Tribal spokesman objects to spent fuel storage plan."

The earliest Pioneer Press article directly related to Prairie Island appeared April 19, 1991 with the headline "Radioactive casks 'hot potato' for NSP." It stands to reason that NSP would have much preferred to obtain a permit for its plan without a loud public discussion of its dangers. Seen in this light it is perhaps not so surprising that pro-nuclear sponsors underplayed ***Economic Stability*** in its dealings with the media, although this is only a partial explanation. The question deserves further study.

Unsafe

Unsafe: ("Despite the nuclear industry's efforts to convince the public otherwise, the facts have shown that nuclear power is dangerous and harmful. There is no convincing evidence that it can be safely controlled.")

Unsafe resonates with a number of economically diverse issue cultures nurtured by value cleavages with the dominant culture. Resonant themes include dissatisfaction with the manifest destiny/man-over-nature individualism of American mythology, often expressed as a Christian land stewardship ethic; rejection of corporatism; and interest in non-Christian spiritualisms, especially those associated with Native American and Asian traditional religions.

Unsafe led an article in the Pioneer Press announcing a Minnesota Health Department report which said that NSP's plan would subject people living nearby to dangerous levels of radiation. "Northern States Power Co.'s plan to store highly radioactive wastes in casks on Prairie Island will increase the cancer risk to six times the state standard, according to a report to be released today." (4/19/91)

The Star Tribune first articulated *Unsafe* in an August 31, 1991 article framed as a summary of cautionary remarks made by US Senator Paul Wellstone to the Two Rivers Cultural Explosion at Fort Snelling State Park.

> "I'm not saying that under no circumstances is the (fuel) storage unacceptable, but what if all the questions can't be satisfactorily answered?" Wellstone said. "If they can't be, I'd come down on the side of not taking a chance with the health and safety of the public."

Unsafe appears in the Republican Eagle for the first time on March 22, 1991 in an article pegged to the Tribe's request that the state study the health effects of the casks.

> "They also want state officials to direct the state Health department to study possible effects of the project on people living near the plant, which is on the Mississippi River in Red Wing."

Unsafe and *Progress* appear with equal frequency in the Red Wing paper (40 and 39 instances, respectively). This is interesting because in that community, open support for NSP far outweighed the opposition. For example, only one Red Wing City Council member voted against a resolution supporting the storage plan, and he was defeated in the next election by an NSP employee after an acrimonious campaign which centered on the incumbent's anti-nuclear activities.

Red Wing became the geographic center for an extremely controversial debate which has global implications; thus it appears that sponsors of anti- and pro-nuclear packages, articulate and powerful on both sides, aggressively courted the local paper. Strongly anti-nuclear positions (***Alternatives, Environmental Racism*** and *Unsafe* combined) account for 55 percent of instances of packages expressed. However, the proportionate frequency of *Unsafe* in the Red Wing local daily indicates the immediacy and the heat of the debate in that community, not necessarily the newspaper's support of ***Unsafe*** sponsors. A separate analysis by the author revealed that the Republican Eagle's editorials on the topic were consistently supportive of NSP, often stridently attacking the utility's opponents. [21]

As Gitlin and others have shown, [22] news routines may help explain media frames. In this case routinization helps explain why ***Unsafe*** appears so often in the Republican Eagle: its office is just a few miles from the Dakota reservation, putting its reporters close to sponsors of packages supporting the Tribe's primary message -- that the casks are unsafe. Pioneer Press environmental reporter Charles Lazsewski said that he often found himself wanting for the Native American perspective at press time, due to the 90 miles separating his newspaper's office and Prairie Island, and due to the fact that many reservation residents do not have telephones. [23]

Alternatives

Alternatives:("NSP has chosen Prairie Island for a storage dump because the Native Americans who live there are thought to be too poor and too weak to resist.")

The Circle and the Republican Eagle, despite their editorially opposed positions, each used proportionately fewer statements of ***Alternatives*** than either of the metropolitan dailies.

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21 Between April 1990 and March 1992 the Repubican Eagle published at least ten editorials strongly favoring NSP's request. As early as August 1191, well before the public hearing process had begun, the paper called on the PUC to approve the dry-cask plan. My research turned up no editorials critical of the utility during that time frame, although the paper did run two submitted opinion pieces opposing the plan. The editorials frame the issue in terms of the city's economic well-being, and demonize anti-nuclear activists, exemplified by a piece entitled, "She's anti-nuclear nut case" attacking Australian Physicians for Social Responsibility founder Helen Caldicott after she visited the reservation in support of the Tribe's opposition. (11/11/91)

22 Gitlin, Todd. 1980. **The Whole World is Watching.** Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

23 Interview with the author, February 12, 1993, St. Paul, Minnesota.

This may indicate the positioning of the papers in the state's media hierarchy. The Circle and the Republican Eagle, with smaller circulation sizes and nonmetropolitan, localized audiences, occupy peripheral positions in the Minnesota media hierarchy; as the state's largest papers the Star Tribune and Pioneer Press comprise the center of that hierarchy and play primarily to urban audiences.

It may also reveal differences between audiences targeted by the metropolitan dailies on the one hand, and by The Circle and the Republican Eagle on the other. Donohue, Tichenor and Olien showed that metropolitan daily newspapers tend to target wealthier readers and in fact have drawn back their circulation in the inner city, where The Circle's target audience lives. [24] As urban dailies the Star Tribune and Pioneer Press are much closer to the seats of formal power than either the Republican Eagle or The Circle. The institutions which ultimately upheld NSP's interests -- the Public Utilities Commission and the Minnesota Legislature -- are in St. Paul, not in Red Wing, and are located a world away from Franklin and Bloomington Avenues, the heart of the Minneapolis Native American community where The Circle's audience lives. Although The Circle's target community is in Minneapolis, most of its constituents are severely marginalized. Thus, in every sense other than geographic The Circle's readers are peripheral, and are of little or no interest to either the Pioneer Press or the Star Tribune's advertisers.

The absence of ***Alternatives*** in The Circle shows that NSP's plan presented the Tribe with an immediate health and economic crisis which had to be addressed before calling for changes in long-term policy concerns. In a Star Tribune article covering the start of PUC hearings in November 1991 (11/18/91), ***Alternatives*** appeared four times, and is illustrated by the following example :

> "While continuing to push for conservation, some opponents are now saying that NSP should, in effect, simply turn down the thermostat at the plant,

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[24] Donohue, George, Phillip Tichenor and Clarice Olien. "Metro Daily Pullbacks and Knowledge Gaps Within and Betweeen Communities." *Communication Research* (July 1986).

> burning fuel at a far slower rate and putting off the need for storage outside the facility."

This illustrates the "ventriloquistic device" [25] of speaking for oppositional sponsors rather than letting them speak for themselves. The device constructs a "sense of immediacy and fair-mindedness" [26] by representing the anti-nuclear position.

It is not only oppositional positions that are paraphrased; the article consists mostly of narrative and contains only three direct quotes. However, anti-nuclear voices are characterized in terms of their outsideness, with NSP representing the "way things are." The state government is signified as "in the middle" of a two-way "battle" between NSP and anti-nuclear activists. NSP executives are "officials," while "anti-nuclear forces" want to "strangle" the nation's nuclear plants. "Tribal members" are pitted against "NSP officials." Bureaucratic supporters of NSP are "state officials" while the Tribe's supporters are its "allies."

Environmental Racism

Environmental Racism: ("NSP has chosen Prairie Island for a storage dump because the Native Americans who live there are thought to be too poor and too weak to resist.")

Environmental Racism's career is emerging with the waste-storage issue. Its arrival and potency as an anti-nuclear package signals the intermingling of racism and environmental degradation in one package, a departure from the first 40-year phase of the nuclear debate. That an anti-nuclear package also resonates with the surrounding anti-racism issue culture, may speak to profound shifts in the political landscape. Just as "liberal" and "conservative" labels no longer suffice in an environment where politicians claim to be "fiscally conservative but socially compassionate," so too, the alliance between (mostly white, middle class) environmentalists and Native Americans is a significant development. Nuclear waste storage may be the first major discourse where the alliance has appeared.

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[25] Corner, Richardson and Fenton, op. cit. 114.

[26] ibid.

A February 1992 article in The Circle summarizes the package:

> "Some observers say that the US government is trading on the poverty and desperation of Indian communities by holding out $100,000 grants for the possible siting of the MRSF (Monitored Retrieval Storage Facility.)"

The Circle was the only paper to signify the government's MRSF grant offer as ***Environmental Racism.***

In contrast to the metropolitan dailies, The Circle is a neighborhood-based, public-affairs-oriented newspaper of the type first identified in the late 1970s and 1980s by Jean Ward and Cecilie Gaziano. [27] The Circle signifies the issue as ***Environmental Racism*** in two-thirds of its discourse statements, never as ***Economic Stability*** and almost never as ***Progress.***

The emphasis on ***Environmental Racism*** in The Circle is by no means surprising, given that paper's advocacy stance and its audience. However, the relative prominence of this package across the entire sample (24 percent of all statements; 13 percent excluding The Circle) suggests that nuclear waste has occasioned a new discourse rather than a continuation of the "atoms for peace or atoms for war" discourse of the past 40 years. The new element in the waste-storage discourse is Native American sovereignty and traditions. That is, the new element is race. Meanings that challenge the race-hierarchical dimensions built into the debate over where to put nuclear waste, can be said to challenge the existing order; while those meanings that avoid race, operate within the accepted range of meanings and thus are alternative rather than oppositional.

As public opinion has "gone green" in recent years, mainstream media also have voiced concern for the environment. ***Environmental Racism*** framed an entire Pioneer Press article coinciding with the start of the PUC hearings.

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[27] Jean Ward and Cecilie Gaziano. 1976. "A new variety of neighborhood press: neighborhood public-affairs publications." *Journalism Quarterly*, vol. 53.

(11/17/91) "Leaders in this new movement even have a name for their concern: They call it 'environmental racism.'"

But this is a far cry from the urgency inherent in The Circle's oppositional signification. Package sponsors in the Prairie Island Dakota Tribe repeatedly named the *immediate crisis* and were not nearly as focused on proposing that white society find alternatives to nuclear power or a safe place to store radioactive waste, both of which are key meanings in ***Unsafe*** and ***Alternatives***.

Two aspects of The Circle's signifying strategy illustrate its oppositional stance. First, The Circle was the only paper in the sample to explore the waste-storage controversy *among* Native nations; all others generalized a supposedly unified "Native American" perspective. Second, only The Circle mentioned the distinct economic class interests of the Tribe, namely the threat to the Treasure Island casino that the casks might pose. Only six tribal members held jobs at the nuclear plant at the time of NSP's proposal, with many more employed at the casino. In a January 1991 article in The Circle, Jeff Armstrong wrote:

> "The economic calculations by the city (of Red Wing) revolve around tax structure, not preservation of jobs, as is commonly assumed. The Treasure Island casino employs more than 1,200 people in the area -- nearly three times as many as NSP -- and is expanding. Granting of the storage permit would likely have a much greater adverse effect on casino jobs than would permit denial on power plant employment."

The interweaving of race, class and environmental concerns may also say something about the cleavages which distinguish new social movements from older struggles based solely on class interests. As Edward J. Walsh put it:

> "Earlier movements were rooted in the class conflicts of capitalist societies, whereas the new ones are said to derive from value cleavages that identify only communities of like-minded people. The latter are drawn less from the politically powerless than from the more sophisticated middle classes." [28]

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[28] Walsh, Edward J. 1988. *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 3 No.4. 586-605: 588.

In these terms the coalition which formed between politically diverse but mostly white, middle class groups on the one hand, and the Prairie Island Dakota Tribe on the other, was itself a new development, especially to the extent that it pitted white, left-wing environmentalists against white labor unions who favored granting NSP's request because of the jobs that would be lost if the plant closed. The alliance between the Tribe and 46 environmental, religious and other groups, was clearly a movement "derived from value cleavages" rather than from unified class interests.

Progress

***Progress*:** ("Nuclear power is a net benefit to society. Technology can and will prevent nuclear waste from harming anyone.")

One recurring theme in the pro-nuclear texts is reassurance that nuclear technology is safe. It is the repeated cadence of scientific certainty, a call to rely on rationality over what is variously referred to as instinct, emotion, ignorance or mysticism. This excerpt from the Star Tribune's first article in the study's sample (3/22/91) illustrates the ***Progress*** package:

> "NSP spokesman Tom Bushee said in an interview yesterday that there is 'no indication...that this project represents a health threat to anyone living near the plant.'"
>
> 'I don't know if another study would add anything to that,' he said.
>
> 'There's nothing in any scientific literature that says these levels of exposure (to radioactivity) are going to cause cancers, so it doesn't seem reasonable to set up an elaborate screening and prevention program for a problem that isn't there,' he said."

Corner, Richardson and Fenton say that this textual device asks people to overcome their "anxieties about human interference with the forces of nature, a classic ingredient of our culture's myths of science." [29]

Several southern Minnesota legislators were among the familiar names sponsoring the ***Progress*** package. Running through their statements is a tendency to characterize NSP's opponents as "less rational" than the

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29 Corner, Richardson and Fenton, 112.

reassuring nuclear industry experts. In an article published in The Republcan Eagle the day after an administrative law judge recommended letting the legislature decide the issue, a Red Wing lawmaker declared himself on the side of science, took a swipe at traditional Native American values, and relieved himself of a political hot potato, all in one statement:

> "Sen. Lyle Merhkens, IR-Red Wing, will not support a bill that gave the power to decide to the Legislature. 'I would rather the PUC make the decision. The Legislature is just not the proper board to make a decision that's very technical in nature. The issue is kind of steeped in mysticism,' Mehrkens said."

The article does not quote legislators who favored having the Legislature decide the matter, even though Mehrkens is quoted as saying that "debate raged for half and hour."

The Mother of All Frames: News is Bureaucracy in Motion

The rhythm of bureaucratic decision making occasioned nearly all of the articles in the three mainstream papers in the the Prairie Island narrative. Articles were written to announce upcoming meetings or hearings; to advance events; or to relay the score going into or coming out of the most recent bureaucratic contest.

The Prairie Island discourse is framed throughout as a political competition. Two questions underlying the narrative are, "Who will decide the issue?" and "Who will get stuck holding the hot nuclear waste?"

The story quickly became a contest between anti-nuclear and ***NIMBY*** sponsors on one side and pro-nuclear sponsors on the other, to define the nuclear waste as either a) a temporary nuisance which will disappear as soon as the federal government finds a permanent repository for the nation's waste; or, b) the first step down a path toward disaster. In the latter signification, Prairie Island would become a permanent waste site because the federal government cannot be trusted to find a permanent waste site. This exerpt from a July 16, 1991 Star Tribune article illustrates both types of meaning:

> "But commission members are leery of the plan and wondered aloud whether temporary storage of the fuel eventually could turn into a permanent nuclear waste dump on the banks of the Mississippi...

> NSP officials don't have the answer to that because it's up to the federal government to locate a permanent disposal site for radioactive fuel from the nation's 111 commercial nuclear plants. After years of work, it repeatedly has failed to do so and there is little chance a permanent disposal method will exist until the next century.
>
> However, company officials have said they're confident that some permanent disposal method will be found within 25 years, the length of time they plan to store Prairie Island's spent fuel in massive steel casks."

The headline for the first article in the Pioneer Press reads, "Radioactive casks 'hot potato' for NSP." One observer even went so far as to suggest that politicians openly sponsor packages:

> "The nuclear-waste disposal issue is clouded by the *NIMBY* and *NIMTOO* syndromes. *NIMBY* stands for 'not in my backyard.' *NIMTOO* means 'not in my term of office.'"[30]

Conclusion and Summary

With ***Alternatives*** represented proportionately more often than any other package in the three dailies (23 percent on average), the discourse exemplifies the mainstream media's media's tendency to play up alternative rather than oppositional meanings, even when some protest groups voice fundamental critiques of the established system. The debate as it was repackaged in the three dailies signifies the quasi-political authority to NSP's top employees, for example, and defines oppositional groups by their outsideness. Only The Circle "went inside" the consequences of the controversy for Native Americans. That paper was also the only one to acknowledge that the casks present an economic threat to the Tribe; implicit in the other papers is the assumed consensus that nuclear power can be abandoned only at great economic sacrifice *by everyone*.

The present discourse consists of six packages, of which one is purely pro-nuclear, three are anti-nuclear, and two are ambivalent on that fundamental question. Based on frequency of packages, the two smallest newspapers in the sample -- although editorially on opposite sides of the issue -- presented

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[30] Red Wing Republican Eagle, 3/30/90, "Nuclear waste: Time to address the issue," commentary by Donald H. Williams; reprinted from the Christian Science Monitor.

Alternatives far less often than did the metropolitan dailies. It is suggested that this reflects their peripheral status in the media hierarchy and the peripheral status of their audiences. The Red Wing Republican Eagle addresses a non-metropolitan audience which is economically dependent on NSP, while The Circle is targeted toward an inner-city Native American community.

Race is the new frame in the nuclear-waste discourse.
The introduction of the race element into the discourse (the ***Environmental Racism*** package), expressed as support for Native American land rights and traditions, emphasizing the dangers that Native Americans face from nuclear waste, and linking environmental degradation and racism, suggests that nuclear waste discourse is distinct from previous nuclear-power discourses.

Another indicator that the nuclear-waste discourse may be truly new is its newly-allied sponsors among white environmentalists, white Christians, white anti-racism activists and Native American spiritual leaders. The analysis in this paper reveals that sponsors and issue cultures overlap in their interactions with the media. These overlapping issue cultures operating in the discourse include: insecurity about the economy; skepticism of big business and big government; growing awareness of and resistance to subtle, institutionalized racism; and differentiated expressions of Christianity such as land stewardship and solidarity with people of color, especially with Native American peoples.

As the discourse progresses in the United States, the race frame may differentiate further to encompass geographic as well as ethnic status, giving rise to yet another sponsor group -- rural activists, especially in the West. That is because the next stage in the controversy is likely to center on the federal government's steps to finally take control of the nation's nuclear waste. The discourse already is international, occurring simultaneously in Europe and the United States. However, in coming years the discourse will expand to include other nations, particularly Third World nations, the global equivalent of Native reservations and poor rural communities in the United States.

Radioactive garbage will continue to be a political "hot potato," an issue that will not go away, an issue which cannot make political careers but which can surely destroy them. Thus its discourses will continue to attract sponsors in overlapping issue cultures, creating new tangled webs.

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Public Mind, Private Eye:
Critical Orality-Literacy and TV Criticism

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Public Mind, Private Eye: Critical Orality-Literacy and TV Criticism

When we look at differences between what is being said and how it is being said we invest hope in what can be gained from the difference. Sometimes we spy only shallow ironies, drawn over short cultural bridges, like the way in which the crown jewels are seen by visitors to its museum presentation. The museum-goer rides a "people mover" kind of conveyance which moves you past the display at a predetermined pace. How you devour the splendor of the sight is tied up in the works of the machine as it politely urges you along, and you can just as easily think that the display is moving past you and you are the stationary object. The TV news stories covering the moving walkway cast it as a humorous story about another culture's attempt to maintain security and order, one of those stories that 'makes you think, don't it?' My exhausted, postmodern, watery-yellow-jaundiced eyes took a tour of the Art Institute of Chicago and superimposed over it a passage through Pirates of the Caribbean -- minus the briny deep, of course.

In what follows I intend to wade into some of the relationships between the 'how' and the 'what' of two different television presentations, beginning with observations on the side of shallow ironies, but using these aspects to move toward much deeper differences in the way television programs relate what is being said to how it is being said. Along the way I will be trying to construct two guideposts. First, that even though the how and the what are discussed as different dimensions, they are most useful when one is related to the other. This guidepost leaves off any definitive determinations of which is still and which is moving. or which is the cart and which the horse. Accordingly this guidepost is constituted through the observer/critic/author/subject position from which a relation is seen, and two different conceptions are juxtaposed to form it. The first subject position notes the author of each of the television programs which will be examined here. The author's presence in the cases of both shows unify the presence of the author with the act of speaking. The second subject position critical in this paper is an attempt to account for my own choice of form and forum, since an 'author-ized' subject position on, in, and through these pages will re-present several particulars from the programs (while neglecting others) in order to "say something" about the television programs. "Saying," in this case, translates into writing, and the accompanying literate practices. My position in this venture will attempt to keep its own literate practice in view, and maintain a degree of reflexiveness (like the shot in The Magnificent Ambersons, where at the end of a tracking shot of a carriage ride, as the camera turns to a view back down the way it came we see the dolly tracks that the camera traveled and still travels down.)

The 'how/what' relationship in this paper, for example, includes metaphorical uses of *seeing, view* and *vision* which are constructed of words and not pictures. At the same time I'm suggesting a consideration of *what is being said* and *how it is being said* where in many cases the issue is what is being shown, illustrated, or performed. Since the practice of this paper uses literate constructions to juxtapose two television programs, such differences as that between showing and telling are significant to the relationship between how something is constructed and what is constructed.

The second guidepost attempts to situate these two television programs in relation to their medium. One program, the 1989 Bill Moyers production The Public Mind: Image and Reality in America, was [1] a four-part series about media, news, illusion, and commodification. It included videotape of quotations from the mouths in the faces of Todd Gitlin, Mark Crispin Miller, Neil Postman, and Stuart Ewen among other academics to advance the program's argument(s) about how "the media" has a role in the "public mind." Even though the argument(s) appeared to the viewer in a linear video program, the second guidepost seeks to establish the dominance of "literate" choices in how Moyers and The Public Mind presented the argument(s). The second program is the 1994 summer replacement program NBC allowed Michael Moore to produce called TV Nation.[2] This program approaches media criticism by first burying it under the show's superficial appearance as a satirical magazine-format news and information show. It consciously uses this veneer as a critical instrument for performing a televisual operation. In light of the Moyers program, a look at a selection of segments will show that the arguments are constructed not so much within the "literate" form as more around it. The program approaches what we might for now call an argumentative style grounded in "secondary orality."

It might at first seem appealing to lay out the premises of the orality/literacy arguments and then look in the programs for conspicuous signs, which are of course just sitting there waiting to be parsed out. Although this might support the clarity of an argument "in favor of...", I think it dons the orality/literacy argument only to inherit its limitations. I hope not to reinvent the literate wheel. I hope instead that through the considerations of the how/what relations in the programs, that the place where this paper leads contributes to orality/literacy from its own unique angle; toward a critical re-appraisal of the advantages of orality/literacy in its power to account for aspects that attempt to maintain transparency.

from a (the) binary to the (a) continuum

Our considerations of how something is said in these programs leads to observations of voice and standing, to the point of view from which things are represented in both words and images. When voice and standing are present also in what is being said we can consider these representations as questions of ethos.

The ability to discuss voice, standing and ethos in the two programs will necessitate placing the praise and blame under some identifier – in other words, conceiving of some kind of author. It may be acceptable to suggest that, when not ascribed to another person, the words and images in The Public Mind are Bill Moyers', and that TV Nation's words and images are those of Michael Moore. I do not suggest this in order to enter the game of guessing intentions. When we learn either film theory or production skills and practices we are made (sometimes agonistically) aware of the collaborative nature of film and television production, and that the nature of authorship is complicated. A healthy suspicion of this point may be in order. Beyond the questions of attribution, describing authorship as a collaborative venture may imply a hierarchy of ideas and production, where the single author, writing a book or an article, has somehow produced a "purer" and more thoughtful mental product than the production "team." Our antennae should certainly be up if this hierarchy is suggested in the lone author forum it congratulates, granting a higher position to its own "pure" intellectual clarity. We need therefore to describe authorship in these programs in awareness of its uncertainty, but not letting the uncertainty be replaced by the hierarchy of ethos often perpetuated by and for the benefit of intellectual culture, a culture that, as David Bianculli (1992, pp. 24 - 25) and Alexander Nehamas (1988, p. 224) point out, is often pleased to denounce television altogether. We should keep speculation about why this happens in mind as we start to shed some light on different choices of rhetorical strategies taken in the television programs we are considering.

The two programs have a series of similarities which relate their voice, standing and ethos. Both programs run about an hour per show. [3] They use video as the original recording technology. They primarily use the coding of "single camera" production in both the narrated set-up shots and the segments that are being set up. So in neither case is there a central control location, even one as liminal as the black (studio set) time and place where 60 Minutes segments are shown/told from.

Instead the speaking voice of the central author can be treated as a topic, in the sense of "place" as a subject location. From these subject-locations they use set-up segments to connect pieces of the programs. The set-ups feature Moyers and Moore as the control author, directly addressing the video camera. Neither of them appears to be reading, which corresponds to the predominant conventional way to appear whether one is reading off a 'prompter or not. These example similarities can be found in the shallows of looking at the programs. Shallows are at least reliable and possibly essential place to start toward the deeper currents, and should not be seen as pejorative or superficial.

More complicated similarities could associate the political agendas of the programs. Both could easily be understood on the left side of the political spectrum. Moyers program questions the actions of "the media." They are described as institutions that contribute to and help in the constitution of the public sphere.

Moyers, with the assistance of Ben Bagdikian, asserts that "the media" need to be seen as corporations acting out of fiscal interests, an identity often obscured by "the media's" real and/or constructed public role. We are reminded that the news media are the only business specifically "protected" by the constitution.

Moore's version of this agenda starts from TV Nation's fairly constant attack on corporations. Despite its use of NBC's equipment, distribution, and promotion, the show makes its criticisms of the network. The very first segment of the show to air discussed how much less money and space were dedicated to the show compared to, for example, Blossom. And in a segment about the U. S. corporate operations on the Mexican side of the Texas/Mexico border, Moore includes the factory run by General Electric, parent corporation of NBC, and his difficulties in securing an interview with them.

The majority of the time TV Nation is not directly about the media in the same way as The Public Mind, but similarities are still in evidence. The Public Mind is the television medium being used to criticize "The Media," which includes print and broadcast journalism, advertising, and cultural (mass) communication in general. TV Nation broadens the objects of criticism to include the corporate part of U. S. culture more generally, but the entity doing the criticizing is still the television medium, and any kind of culture that can be criticized must be able to be represented on the program. The title even suggests an electronic version of the periodical *The Nation* and its similar leftist politics – an impression confirmed when Moore wore a *Nation* baseball cap during the July 21, 1995 program airing. When we attend to either program's subject position we are in a relationship with similar left-leaning politics, always through the television medium, and therefore about the media.

Similar dimensions of social construction can be found in the titles of both programs, as they respectively make a move to create an "us" that includes the viewer. The Public Mind: Image and Reality in America suggests a nation-state boundary as a way to organize the topic on which it speaks. [4] TV Nation describes a structure simultaneously tied as a nation-state and as an audience. The political social designation nods toward to the political topics of both programs, which will try to speak about social organization in such national terms. The shows thus associate, in both title and activity, with conceptions of politics as relations of power situated on a national scale, rather than at smaller sub-cultural groups, similarly sized cultural structures that involve whole ways of life as described by Raymond Williams (1958), or Marshall McLuhan's larger "global village" levels (1962, p. 31). Even so, the adoption of a position in the political relations of power by both programs does not exclude commentary on each of these other levels of social organization and grouping.

The similarities mentioned above could serve as a groundwork for entering the conversation that the two shows have between each other, where similarities and differences both exist. It's important to note that similarities and differences are not simply two exclusive categories into which everything must fall one way or the other. Difference and similarity are importantly matters of degree. We are better served, I believe, by considering such terms as a continuum rather than a binary opposition. Things are more than simply "the same" or "different," and the gradual chiaroscuro between the two can allow us to learn much more.

The politics for both shows share an agenda that attempts to empower its audience. For the sake of discussion we can even consider many members of the audience the same. But noting the differences in strategies for empowerment make a significant first step into a dimension of difference between the two programs. As we pursue some dimensions of difference the respective rhetorical strategies of each show become more accessible.

from empowerment to the "author"

We can return to the specific components of ethos in each program to develop a description of each respective rhetorical strategy. As the differences are described we move from

- how the speaker is situated in order to speak

to

- what the speaker says and illustrates

to

- how the situation of the speaker, inscribed in the act, situates the power of the audience.

By tracing this movement we should be in a better position to consider each program's rhetorical strategy.

Moyers' minding the public

Moyers is situated as the speaker and main author of the program. The camera is often at his eye-level, and in one case, looking down at him, but never does the camera point up at him. He speaks from a stationary position, dressed in a suit and tie. He occasionally looks down; the gesture can either be punctuation or thoughtfulness. He is not looking at a script, though the gesture brings the possibility to mind. As a viewer I am aware, then, of the written prepared quality of his authorial "remarks."

The one case of looking down at Moyers is worth noting. The camera is positioned above him; behind him we can see a "bird's-eye" view of an urban landscape of buildings, roads, the city below. Why is he here? Is the point of view privileged? Is it powerfully above, like that of a governor (or just his press secretary), a philosopher-king, a cartographer, or a reporter? And the question then becomes why are we as the audience looking down at him?

Moyers approaches the narrator's mark with notable choices of a "professional" appearance and attire, a calm and reasonable demeanor, and a straightforward propositional flow of sentences. The words we here spoken have all the signs of previous preparation; no stopping in mid sentence to rearrange an idea or a direction, no stopping to search for a word, a flow of sound that has benefited from careful deliberation, preparation, and reconsideration before the act of speaking. We hear a performance of the script.

I have mentioned how Moyers is situated with a physical description of how he appears in different senses; what impression he constructs with the camera positioning, with clothing and behavior, and his manner of speaking. He is also situated through his context as a television journalist with a public history. He mentions at the end of the show how he has "seen" the practices critiqued in the show from several angles, as a member of a presidential administration and as a network news worker. The references reminds the audience of some previous awareness they may have of Moyers as a public figure, which further situates his ethos. His very ability to make a four-part series (with his own production company) with corporate sponsorship and air time on a national public television network is partially based on his ethos as a television journalist. He can reasonably expect that members of the audience are aware of his style, and they may have been exposed to some of the profiling magazine and newspaper stories about him. An October, 1989 Esquire story (Zurawik, 1989), which appeared the month before The Public Mind started to be aired, went into his background. He had trained as a minister before entering print journalism, then politics, and then broadcast journalism starting as a commentator before moving on to his own long-form biographical, cultural, and political pieces for public television.

My interest is not so much in the politics of television that allowed the programs to be funded, produced, and aired. The aspects of Moyers' past that led up to The Public Mind situate his public persona; the philosopher/preacher, the green-eye-shade who has "been there" and is now "uniquely qualified" to speak to each audience member about her or his "Public Mind."

I borrowed the pitch phrase "uniquely qualified," which one network used as a promotional tag at the end of its newscasts, because of its peculiar oxymoronic sense. "Unique" is from the Latin *unicus* as single, sole, alone of its kind; "qualified" describes that which is endowed with qualities, or possessed of accomplishments, which fit one for a certain end, office or function. Does uniqueness make it hard to fit in, to fill the office or function? Does attaining a qualified status mean that fitting the office or function has won out over uniqueness? If we use this sense to think of the situation of Moyers or, as we will see next in Moore, we can see the difficulty of maintaining a situation that criticizes the corporate world within an environment of corporations.

Moore's eyeing the public

From the first, Moore is never far from this issue of his situation in relation to the corporation. The first images of him are on the street in front of the NBC entranceway (where he registers the previously mentioned complaints about the lavish treatment of Blossom in office space and budget). The camera is hand held, at Moore's eye level. The image and sound present Moore in the context of urban noise and the ordered disorder of people on the sidewalk, cars on the street, and the revolving doors of corporate entranceways. The disorder is not unusual for a city street scene, but given the predominance of controlled images (Moyers' comparable narrator pieces, for example) is appears more disordered as a television image. Moore interacts with the individuals on the street with him, explaining to passers-by who he is, what he is doing, and what he has done. His direct address to the camera is intercut (and jump-cut) with these interview pieces, which include the various reactions of the people he has talked to. He uses the well-worn format of the street interview to new ends, even as scenery to situate his program.

The punctuation mark of the street interview sequence from the first program is some footage (in the same location, outside the NBC doors) of Al D'Amato. At first D'Amato is unsure of who Moore is or what he is doing, just like any of the other street interviews. Moore has previously asked people if they had seen his movie Roger and Me, which many of them had not seen. D'Amato does not recognize it at first, but then recalls how it made the GM corporate executives look – uncaring, cruel, insensitive, greedy, and opportunistic. D'Amato jokes, "You won't make me look like that, will you?" and laughs. The laugh is repeated several times, with the image magnified electronically, a little closer, larger, and more monstrous at each repetition. The image answers Alphonse's question. Moore brings the audience into the game of image manipulation. [5]

Moore's appearance reflects a different sense of "style" than Moyers. Moore effects a more casual appearance. He leaves out the ties for the most part, and usually wears a baseball cap and sneakers. Such matters of "style" are part of the situating of the author. They form an important par of how things are said. Similar attention to style is often lost somewhere in the analytic process, either not taken seriously or sectioned off as present but non-constituting appearances. If we take an approach similar to Dick Hebdidge (1979), we can try to reunite style into the practice of communicating. But such a reading should not be singularly traced to a subculture and its resistant practices.

We need to consider appearances within the contexts that Moyers and Moore appear within. Moyers, as mentioned previously, can arguably be understood as a style of professionalism. Moore's appearance is "unprofessional" by comparison, and not just to Moyers' appearance, but, ignoring the designer flannel on home repair programs, Moore's attire intends toward familiar 'comfort' in its plainness and simplicity, through its everyday-ness, and in contrast to the cherished generous corporate 'dress-casual-on-Friday' programs, discussed as if casual dress one day a week is a material benefit. Such an appearance can serve two different but related functions. First, it broadcasts an image that reflects and represents the style of viewers who never usually see themselves represented as voices of journalistic authority – much less, any televised presence at all, since even video-gag program hosts look an awful lot more like Moyers – in suits – than Moore. Second, his different identification not only separates Moore from the tradition television news reporters, anchors, and those who appear on political talk programs, but it disassociates him from their "standards and practices." It puts the question of credibility on the table by questioning how credibility is communicated through any uniform(ed) style which is usually assumed to be the authoritative way to look.

When Moore is questioning the relationship between appearance and credibility, he places the nature of his own authorship on the table. In a typical segment introduction, he asks a question to one of his people on the street and invites them to look at what he found to answer it, to go along on the search for an answer. When his persona appears to be less professional, less instantly credible, the nature of his authority is different from Moyers.

He is not an expert on the matters he looks into, not a "uniquely qualified" professional. Moore's authority builds on the different grounds of identification with the audience and their active participation in the mutual gaining of experience (rather than expertise) that his invitation includes. The viewer/listener is invited to participate, to take a more active role. What Moore puts on the table is really his grounded, situated position as an author. The audience engages with the persona rather than becoming an audience to its ethos, constituting it in the process.

So how does Moore stop from tumbling into *incredible* mediocrity? It isn't simply the case that the more mediocre the show the more active role the audience will assume. Iain Boal has described how control and threats of disruption relate, indicating one possible way to think of such limits. The flow of television exhibits a degree of "naturalized" smoothness. The "liveness" of on-the-street interviews threatens the seamlessness of this flow, and yet the segmentation remains rigid (Boal, 1995, pp. 7 - 8). Moyers' professional delivery, his speaking practices, echo the naturalized smoothness of professionalism portrayed on and through video. Moore questions this "smoothness" by presenting the on-the-street interviews, but snaps self-consciously back to television's rigid control through selection, editing, and manipulation. The back and forth reference to television flow foregrounds the production practices, suspending the TV "reality" in its own webs of significance. Professionalism falls as one category within the umbrella of manipulative production practices. Disinterring and foregrounding these practices offers them to the active skepticism of viewers.

The ideas of "professional" and "expertise" ground Moyers' approach, such that the topic, the place of the argument, is balanced on his standing within the ethos of the profession. The profession, in this case, is the tradition of broadcast journalism, for Moyers grounded in print journalism and civic participation as a presidential press secretary. [6]

Such experience allows Moyers to use his ethos to question "the media" itself, in terms of how it has changed over against a previous time. His points are thus grounded in a passage from a hypothetical "then" to now. We refer to an origin of ethics that looks over our present shoulder. Like Moyers' own biography, expressed as, in, and through his ethos, we look to the past of print journalism for the way to measure the present against some "way things are supposed to be." Some version of a historical record becomes both the measuring stick and the background narrative that frames an understanding of the present. The medium used to communicate evolves, but does not fundamentally change the nature of practices of news or journalism, as Moyers relates the story. The ethics are fundamental. "The Media" may have experienced (r)evolutionary technological change, but the ethical system remains in its place, beneath such changes. When the particular medium changes the definition of news or fact, the ethical system has been violated and something is in need of correction. This is where the dark side of Moyers' description of the public mind is situated; an electronic communication environment changes the nature of news and facts, either toward commodification or toward superficiality, and away from their historicity.

The practice of TV Nation puts Moore in a position where this grounding is part of what is being critiqued. He moves into his criticism of not just the corporate world but the system of expertise that supports it. Moore arrives at his situation of authorship with two significant elements in his "experience" which are interrelated. The first element is the documentary Roger and Me. The satirical documentary film stakes out a different territory than the practices of broadcast journalism. Roger and Me draws more from the tradition of experimental and personal/diary filmmaking than the network-produced style, which tends toward presentation of issues as extremely long forms of television news stories. Moore's voice in the film is situated, personal, and biographical. It makes no pretenses toward "objectivity" as it is usually cast by the professionalism of broadcast news practice.

The second factor of situating Moore's authorship in his "experience" grows out of his background, having been from Flint, Michigan. As portrayed in the film Roger and Me, it is a workers town devastated by the layoffs at the General Motors factory. The damage to the town is what, in the script of the film, prompts Moore to try (and fail) to set up a meeting with Roger Smith. In TV Nation, this background again comes into play when Moore goes to Russia to find out what happened to the atomic weapons that were reportedly pointed at Flint. The tone of this and other of Moore's pieces from TV Nation carry echoes of the same personal filmmaking practices echoing back to Roger and Me.[7] He is situated having grown up in a quite average, working class white family. The continuity between his background and the choices of style and appearance (mentioned previously) serve within the show to verify a kind of consistency in his televisual persona. Two senses can be made of this; making a successful film and having his own television show have not turned him into one of the "media" people driven to become inauthentic by the desire for more power and money. But the second sense may be more closely written into the film and the show themselves; that regular people, "just like you and me!," can sometimes make films and television shows. Often these biographies become a familiar "up from the working class" tone, where the greatest achievement of such a life is to gain entry to the middle class. Moore's televisual presentation of his background resists this by not making middle class membership a requirement for understanding or engaging with his critique.

Whether other biographical meanings and experiences could be mentioned for either (or any larger) authorial presence, I would only see their relevance as they are written into each program. My concern here is not with the actual authenticity or inauthenticity of the author (and the fallacies that go along), but only insofar as it is part of the situating ethos that constitutes the program itself.

from an object to the experience

As opposed to Moyers' presence as the experienced expert, Moore grounds his ethos in his attempt to situate himself among the audience. When he moves from the on-the-street interviews into the video segments, he points into the lens (into the viewer's TV screen, toward the viewer) as the place where his interview subject can see the results of his search after answers. The subject complies, and looks straight into the camera, into the viewer's television screen, which then cuts to the beginning of the segment. In this gesture Moore juxtaposes the physical relationship between inside the screen (in the TV set) and the viewer outside. [8]

In this gesture, the TV Nation of the title comes into being at the moment the show is viewed. The TV Nation-state intended by the title is constituted by the participation in the show, as viewers. The existence of the show does not grant the luxuries built into The Public Mind. In Moyers communication world, there is expertise that can be employed like a specialized plumbing wrench. We can describe an object which is there, like the Public Mind which we can discuss apart from our being subject to it. We can stop – use expertise to call upon a history which will give us a way to understand where we are going to go wrong – and then start again with this new knowledge. On the other hand, once within the TV Nation, we cannot stop it and think about it without leaving it altogether.

Oddly, there is still meta-talking, or talking about talking (the introductory interviews, for example), and then there is talking itself (the segment). The significance of this move may rest in the mutuality of the meta-talking, that it is an activity that makes no pretense of taking the viewer out of the flow of the program, just a different way to consider the objects in the flow as they are subject to our attention as a media(ted) nation.

Each program has a different way of bringing the past into the present. Bill Moyers arranges for the conversation to include ideas of history and standards. Changes are explanations used to account for the differences between the present and the prefigured set of standards. Michael Moore arranges for the conversation to draw identification between the viewer and the experience of the program. Rather than a history and standards, the viewer brings their identity, the fragments of experiences and stories that are shared and make up a legitimate way to participate. If we assume that both programs call for a response in audience members, we could conclude from the differences in rhetorical strategies that Moyers would bring recommendations for what we, as the American public mind of citizens and participants in "the media('s)" world, should do or ought to do. The viewer's empowerment is realized through making positive changes after careful consideration of the Public Mind, its problems, and what we ought to do to change it.

Moore recommends, on the other hand that we modify our sense of participation. We show up with our fragmented experiences and stories, with our own individual private eyes open, we ask the questions ourselves, and we come to collective conclusions about what needs to be done. The "call for action" under such terms is more elusive, certainly less prescriptive than the use of standards as a measure. This is perhaps the best alternative to such prescriptions, however. Measures and standards imposed onto the audience ask for passive agreement, if not tacit acceptance. While I cannot argue that John Fiske's polysemic resistance (1986) can be assured, Moore's efforts locate action tied to desires arising out of the viewer's mutual participation.

from literacy to secondary orality

A bit of dishonesty has been inscribed into this presentation. I hope it was a small breach of forthrightness that can typically, perhaps generically, be expected in literate communication. We set ourselves a path and proceed toward our goals. We can even say right from the start where we are going. I have always been taken with how Vladimir Nabokov chose to open his novel Laughter in the Dark:

> Once upon a time there lived in Berlin, Germany, a man called Albinus. He was rich, respectable, happy; one day he abandoned his wife for the sake of a youthful mistress; he loved; was not loved; and his life ended in disaster.
>
> This is the whole of the story and we might have left it at that had there not been profit and pleasure in the telling; and although there is plenty of space on a gravestone to contain, bound in moss, the abridged version of a man's life, detail is always welcome. (1938, p. 7)

We can mention where we are going without ever understanding the impact of how we choose to get there.

I mentioned that I would not lay out orality/literacy theory and then fit the example into it, trying to get a more helpful result from approaching it the other way around. I would be less than honest if I did not say that I was being particular about the waters into which this writing has waded, that the understanding of the programs assembled were not coincidentally helpful in at least arriving at that point.

Much of the orality/literacy work suffers from a similar lack of complete honesty. If it subscribes to the constitutive influence of the medium on the communication, than the writing about the writing should not be ignored – or, we could at least come to a similar mutual conclusion.

The two ways to reach this thought about orality/literacy brings The Public Mind and TV Nation back into the light. I have suggested that The Public Mind finds Moyers attempting to reinforce the dominance of print culture, literate thinking, and for what it's worth print journalism. He makes observations, which are translated into propositional statements, and uses a rational framework to reach his conclusions and judgments. Moyers orates at the audience, oralizing a series of written speeches. These speeches are then illustrated with video images.

I have also suggested that TV Nation finds Moore asserting his place amongst the audience, where the struggle against power must be conducted through our communication and through our individual eyes, our asking questions (not of experts), and our seeking out and telling stories to find answers to these questions together. He proposes a conceptual question which functions like the title of a tale, and we are told the story of the quest for the answer to the question. Moore attempts to resonate with the audience, telling stories they themselves might tell. The stories are as reflexively visual as the television environment itself; they narrate illustrations, rather than illustrating narrations.

The reflexive characteristics which offer the opportunity for the audience of viewers to question the authority and practices of the video environment should be adapted more regularly into considerations of orality/literacy, allowing the audience (typically) of readers opportunities for the same questioning. Leaving out such considerations would be complicit in writing that suggests we not attend to the relationship between the "how" and the "what" of communication. This may be the strongest possible invitation to inquire after the authority of such a position .

Notes

[1] It's interesting that the tense here is worth a bit of consideration as a problem of action and time. When we refer to a television program, which tense is correct— that the program "is" and "does," or that it "was" and "did"?

[2] As of July 21, 1995, TV Nation has returned to the air on the Fox network. The present tense therefore makes more sense. Michael Moore mentioned on the 7/21/95 program that the show will be there for "the next eight weeks." It has completed its run. Interested viewers are kept informed of the show's future status through the internet. They also sell baseball caps for the show.

[3] Like questions of tenses (that a show "is" or "was"), the unit under consideration presents some challenges. We can talk of a series, an episode, or a segment, and we also often talk about a "show." These differences might seem trivial depending on the point trying to be made. More important, perhaps, is that this indeterminate way of talking about "the show" reinforces the way they are decontextualized. When I tape a program at home I think nothing of cutting out the commercials. I'm also fanatical about keeping the show credits. Why one and not the other? What does this say about what is included and excluded in the experience of watching? When is it OK and not OK to make changes in the context?

[4] The title does not engage in the idea that "America" can mean a continent rather than simply a nation-state. The politics of national identity suggest using "U.S." for clarity and for responsible recognition of the surrounding countries.

[5] The incident with D'Amato appears in Tom Shales (1994)review of TV Nation which ran in the Washington Post the day the show premiered. Shales thought that the image manipulation that Moore used pointed out how desperate he was to simply go out and make fun of people on camera, which is how Shales reduced all of Moore's work. This is oddly typical of how both Moyers' and Moore's shows were treated in the print media. Whether favorable or unfavorable, they were only reviewed by "entertainment" critics, and treated as just another couple of TV shows.

Perhaps they were trying to use their journalistic business savvy in treating (that is, trivializing) TV media self-criticism. This implies an interest in maintaining control over the appropriateness of forms (media) in which criticism can be done.

[6] "Civic participation" sounds like a way for the profession to account for political participation without the ethical conflict. The point is grounding the value of having the experience as part of one's professional preparation.

[7] Moore does most of the TV Nation pieces himself, but there are three other "producer-hosts" who do segments for the show, coming across like correspondents. It's worth noting that they are always spatially disconnects from Moore. He remains, however, the controlling persona throughout the show, and the other pieces are similar enough to support my analysis in this paper.

[8] The inside the screen and outside the screen bridge is reminiscent of the "immersive" aspect of electronic media, as described by Margaret Morse (1994, pp. 159-60), understood in terms of an oral logic. We add to the idea of "identification" as subjectivity construction a more problematized dialectic, where distance/difference ins informed by what Morse calls introjection, a cyborg-like mixing of two bodies in some inside-outside relationship.

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FEEDING THE DINOSAURS:
ECONOMIC CONCENTRATION IN THE RETAIL BOOK INDUSTRY

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Abstract:

While bookstores play the vital role in book distribution, little attention has been paid to concentration and conglomerate ownership in the retail book trade. In 1958, one-store book firms accounted for nearly 80 percent of book sales; by 1982 that figure had fallen to 26 percent even though single-store retailers continue to account for a majority of all bookstore outlets. Today the chains control 54 percent of bookstore sales. Buoyed by discriminatory discounts and publisher-subsidized advertising campaigns, the chains' dramatic growth seems likely to continue despite the fact that they are less profitable than independent booksellers. The chains' marketing orientation fits well with changes in the broader publishing industry, as publishers seek to rationalize operations in order to improve the bottom line. As books become just another commodity, sold through increasingly centralized and monopolized channels, access for alternative and minority voices is being foreclosed.

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FEEDING THE DINOSAURS:
ECONOMIC CONCENTRATION IN THE RETAIL BOOK INDUSTRY

The book trade, Walter Powell notes, "has long been a neglected American institution."[1] Although the industry as a whole has undergone dramatic changes in recent decades, little scholarly attention has been paid to the evolving structure of the book industry, and particularly to the retail sector that continues to play the vital role in distribution of trade books. The increasingly dominant position of the bookstore chains has drawn much less attention than have similar developments among book publishing firms.[2] This paper examines the still-emerging patterns of dominance in the retail book sector and the collusion with leading publishers that facilitates them, and briefly discusses the implications for more democratic access to the not-so-metaphorical marketplace of ideas.

It has been clear for some time that the book publishing industry is highly concentrated. As Maxwell J. Lillienstein, general counsel for the American Booksellers Association, noted a decade ago,

> In 1958 the 50 largest trade book publishers accounted for 65 percent of all trade book sales, none with an overwhelmingly dominant position. By 1984 five trade book publishers accounted for an astounding 35 percent of trade book sales....[3]

Through subsequent mergers and acquisitions the four largest American publishers accounted for sales of 24 percent of domestic and export sales of all books of all types in 1987 (the 1992 economic census data has not yet been released); while the top 20 publishers accounted for 62 percent of all such sales. These percentages refer to books in all distribution channels, from bookstores to textbooks to mail-order book clubs.[4] Four firms – Bertelsmann, Time Inc., Reader's Digest, and Random House – accounted for 40 percent of all general interest books sold in 1987. And in 1990 Ben Bagdikian estimated that the six largest publishers accounted for more than half of all U.S. book sales, leaving the other 2,500 to 25,000 (depending on whether one counts marginal publishers) firms to divide the remains among themselves.[5] "To fail to recognize a high degree of concentration in the book publishing business in the face of such evidence," Lillienstein concludes, "is to ignore the obvious."[6] Others question the significance of such figures, arguing that publishing remains highly competitive. As evidence, they point to the large, and growing, numbers of active publishers and the proliferation of new entrants to the industry.[7]

Given the wide diffusion of printing establishments and relatively low costs of production, it is not in fact prohibitive for an individual or small business to begin publishing. Without access to distribution channels and the resources to market their products, however, such publishers must remain marginal. Under capitalism, Nicholas Garnham notes, access to cultural industries is largely controlled through oligopolistic controls over distribution channels: "It is cultural distribution, not cultural production, that is the key locus of power and profit."[8]

Industry Structure

Publishers distribute books both to national and regional distributors and directly to bookstores and other accounts. In trade publishing, most bookstore orders until recently were placed directly with publishers, but now slightly more than half of retail book sales pass through distributors. However, the larger book chains buy books in huge quantities direct from publishers (at deep discount) for distribution to their individual stores through centralized warehouse facilities.[9] Mass market paperbacks are distributed primarily through "independent distributors" (independent of the once-dominant American News Co.) which evolved to service news stands and other non-bookstore retail outlets, but now service many bookstores as well. Wholesalers generally offer booksellers narrower discounts than do publishers. However, many bookstores use wholesalers for special orders, in hopes of faster service, or to consolidate several small orders for larger discounts and reduced shipping costs.[10]

Books are sold at discounts typically ranging from 20 (short-discount) to 48 percent (55 percent to distributors) on a returnable basis, in hopes of encouraging booksellers to place larger orders and to order titles that they otherwise might not carry. (Few bookstores can carry more than a sampling of new releases, let alone a comprehensive selection of the hundreds of thousands of titles in print.)[11] Publishers also offer cooperative advertising plans on selected titles, through which they subsidize advertising costs based upon stores' purchase either of that title or of the publisher's entire line. And publishers offer selected book outlets (primarily bookstore chains) additional promotional payments to ensure favorable display, position and even store endorsements.[12]

Books are sold through a variety of channels, most notably through bookstores, college stores, or direct to consumers, libraries and schools. Industry statistics, however, are not compiled with the needs of researchers in mind. Sales data is reported either by type of book (trade, religious, etc.), by distribution channel, or by some combination of the two. The Census of Retail Trade reports on bookstores with paid employees, but only at five-year intervals and after long delays (and in much less detail than that offered through the 1982 economic census). And the American Booksellers Association surveys member bookstores, but excludes the larger chains from its (intentionally non-representative) sample.[13]

The most useful source of industry data is *Book Industry Trends*, compiled by the Center for Book Research. These statistics, however, are not without their limitations. Bookstore sales are subsumed within a broader category of "general retailers" (also including book sales through supermarkets, drugstores, discount and department stores, newsstands and other retail outlets), while remainders are grouped with "other" sales. In 1993, sales through general retailers accounted for some 44 percent of domestic book sales (followed, distantly, by sales through college stores, direct to consumer, and to schools).[14] However, a significant portion of these new book sales, especially those involving mass market paperbacks, are through non-bookstore retail outlets.[15]

In 1992 the average bookstore responding to an American Booksellers Association (ABA) survey had annual sales of $621,936 (up nearly three-fold from 1981 figures), a 38 percent gross margin, and an adjusted net profit (after an allowance for unreported owners' wages) of 1.9 percent of sales. But average net profit fell to 0.6 percent in the ABA's 1994 survey, as independents continued losing market share against the chains.[16] (Profit margins have fluctuated sharply in recent years. A 1981 ABA survey found an average profit of 0.9 percent of gross revenues, down from nearly 4 percent in 1977. But in 1985, the ABA found profits averaging 3.3 percent of sales.[17]) These figures mask substantial variance in performance. The ABA's 1992 survey found profits ranging from a loss of 8.9 percent on sales to a high of 12 percent (the range is -6% to 19.5% if owner's compensation is included with profits).[18]

The number of bookstores has continued to rise in recent years, and many markets are believed to be saturated. In addition, bookselling has traditionally been under-capitalized, and many operators are finding themselves without the financial resources to respond to competition from national chains, the rapidly emerging superstore sector and discounters, or to survive even a brief downturn in sales.

In recent years booksellers have faced fierce competition from discounters, competition their margins are generally too narrow to match. Indeed, in some instances booksellers complain of books being sold through discounters at prices lower than it costs them to obtain the same titles at wholesale.[19]

Chains such as Barnes & Noble and Crown Books discount many titles (particularly best-sellers), and discounting is increasingly common at discount stores (Wal-Marts and the like) and other non-bookstore retailers as well. The industry estimates that at least one-fourth of all paperbacks purchased are bought at discount.[20] Both independent and chain bookstores have been forced to respond. One of the primary ways in which the chains initially responded to discounters was through increased emphasis on remainders and discounts. B. Dalton and Waldenbooks began discounting in the 1980s, cutting prices on best-sellers and selected other titles and opening discount subsidiaries to compete with the discounters head-on. B. Dalton's foray into discounting was disastrous, crippling the chain's profit margins and leading its owner to put it up for sale.[21] Waldenbooks did somewhat better with a discount program targeted at repeat buyers, but is now part of Borders Books, bought in early 1993 to give parent Kmart a stronger presence in the book superstore field (the combined Borders-Walden Group was spun off as an independent firm in 1995). Although remainders (unsold titles offered at nominal prices to clear publishers' inventories or in anticipation of a paperback release) are in theory available to any bookstore on equal terms, in practice they are sold in such large lots that only chains or wholesalers can hope to bid on them directly. Independent booksellers can and do purchase remainders through wholesalers, but the chains inevitably enjoy substantial advantage.

In sum, book retailing was buffeted in the 1980s by increased competition, particularly for the best-selling titles that have long been the industry's bread and butter, and by steadily increasing costs. The result is that despite rapidly rising total sales volumes (about 8 percent per year), profits fell as chain retailers expanded their presence in the industry. However, while many independent bookstores were forced out of business, the once widely anticipated dominance of the B. Dalton and Waldenbooks chains has not developed – at least not in the expected form. While the bookstore chains occupy the commanding heights of the retail book industry today, they have not done so by pursuing their original vision of blanketing the country with standardized mall-based stores offering a relative handful of highly commercial titles. Instead, the leading chains are shrinking their mall store divisions and refocussing on "superstores" offering large selections, discounts on selected categories, author readings, coffee bars and a panoply of services they once disdained as antiquated. This restructuring has permitted the bookstore chains to maintain and expand their market share, although their economic viability absent continuing subsidies from publishers remains to be demonstrated.

It is by no means clear that the bookstore chains reached their present position by being more efficient or better serving readers' needs. Indeed, despite economies of scale and the ability to boost their margins through in-house publishing subsidiaries and high-margin cafe operations, the chains appear to have higher operating expenses and to be less profitable than similarly situated independents (the four largest chains reported an average loss of 5.1 percent on sales in 1995, and a modest net profit of 0.6 percent in 1994 – down from 0.8 percent in 1992).[22] Without infusions of tens of millions of dollars from capital markets and parent firms their ambitious expansion programs might well have sunk under a mountain of debt. And independent booksellers have repeatedly charged that book chains receive preferential treatment in delivery, cooperative advertising payments and discount schedules in violation of anti-trust laws.

The Bookstore Chains

In 1958, one-store book firms accounted for nearly 80 percent of all sales of general interest books, and the four biggest chains accounted for only 11.6 percent of bookstore sales. By 1972, single-store firms' market share had dropped to 58 percent, but only one bookstore chain had as many as 100 stores.[23] The 1982 Census of Retail Trade reported a four-firm concentration ratio of 26.8 percent. The four largest firms operated 1,587 stores with combined sales of $107.4 million; the 50 largest chains, with 2,332 outlets, accounted for more than 45 percent of all bookstore sales. There were, in 1982, 646 chains operating 3,887 outlets. But only nine chains operated more than fifty bookstores, and the overwhelming majority operated fewer than five.[24] By 1987, the top four bookstore chains controlled 34.6 percent of bookstore sales, and operated 2,322 stores; the 50 largest firms controlled 53.6 percent of bookstore sales, operating 3,256 of the country's 11,076 bookstores.[25] That year #3 Barnes & Noble bought #2 B. Dalton from the Dayton-Hudson department store chain (Barnes & Noble has since added the #8 [in 1987] Doubleday and #10 Bookstop chains to its holdings), leaving Crown Books a distant third, ahead of fourth-place Books-A-Million, which gained that rank by purchasing #4 Bookland in the early 1990s. Kmart, meanwhile, bought the surging Borders chain of book superstores in October 1992, and then merged Waldenbooks into the Borders division before spinning the entire operation off last year as part of corporate restructuring.

Federal Trade Commission figures indicate that in 1987 the 'big three' controlled 45 percent of trade bookstore sales, while a 1995 consumer research study found that 57.3 percent of non-juvenile books bought from bookstores were bought from chain outlets (up from 54 percent in 1994, the first time the chains accounted for a majority of sales). (Bookstores, however, accounted for only 45.7 percent of book purchases, with book clubs accounting for another 18 percent and discount stores, food and drug retailers, used bookstores and other outlets accounting for the balance.)[26] Comprehensive government statistics are not consistently gathered or reported. Instead U.S. Census retail book statistics include general-interest, religious and college book stores, even though these form distinct markets. Census Bureau figures show the four largest chains (of some 7,700 bookstore firms) controlling 41.3 percent of retail bookstore sales in 1992, and the 20 largest firms accounting for just over half of total bookstore sales..[27] Were college stores excluded, the top four's market share would certainly be much larger.[28]

Barnes & Noble

Largest of the bookstore chains is Barnes & Noble, which bought B. Dalton in December of 1986 from the Dayton-Hudson department stores for a price estimated at between $250 and $325 million. At the time Barnes & Noble was privately held by president Leonard Riggio and Vendamerica B.V., the U.S. subsidiary of the Dutch retail conglomerate Vendex.[29] Barnes & Noble had been the country's third-largest bookstore firm, operating a thriving mail-order business, 33 discount bookstores, 142 leased college bookstores, and Supermart Books, which serviced 153 book departments in drug stores and supermarkets. Other Barnes & Noble activities include wholesaling remaindered books, proprietary publishing (books published for sale exclusively through Barnes & Noble outlets), and Missouri Book Company, a used college textbook operation. But Barnes & Noble was a much smaller operator than B. Dalton; its revenues for 1985 were $225 million, less than half the $538 million brought in by B. Dalton's 798 stores that year.[30] B. Dalton was founded in 1966 by the Dayton-Hudson department store chain, building a reputation for combining effective marketing with a selection comparable to many independent booksellers.[31] But operating margins sunk from a high of 10.5 percent of sales in 1981 to less than 5 percent in 1985 as a result of new competition from discounters.[32] Profitability continued to fall under Barnes & Noble ownership, and the company is in the process of shrinking its mall-stores division, shedding 96 mall stores in the last two years, while opening 142 superstores.

Barnes & Noble went public in 1993 after spinning off Software, etc. (operating 700 computer software outlets with annual sales of $500 million since its merger with the Babbage's chain in 1994 – the merged operation, Neostar, operates 120 of its 817 outlets in Barnes & Noble stores), Barnes & Noble's college division (156 college stores), and Supermart Books Distributors, Inc. (servicing supermarkets and drug stores). Proceeds from the stock offering were used to reduce the company's substantial debt (much of it stemming from the B. Dalton purchase). Between them Vendex and Riggio retain control of the now-independent subsidiaries and continue to hold 37.7 percent of Barnes & Noble stock (which operates the Barnes and Noble, B. Dalton, Bookstar, Bookstop, Doubleday and Scribner's chains, as well as Barnes & Noble's mail-order and proprietary publishing businesses).[33] Barnes & Noble also recently purchased 20 percent of Canada's largest bookstore chain, Chapters, and is helping to finance its superstore expansion efforts.[34]

In 1995 Barnes & Noble reported sales of $1.98 billion from the chain's 1,013 stores, up 22 percent from 1994's $1.6 billion in revenues operating 966 stores (698 mall stores and 268 superstores). In an effort to improve its shrinking margins, the chain has been expanding its proprietary publishing operations (largely low-cost reprints of literary classics which have fallen into the public domain, but also new editions of out-of-print self-help titles and original books commissioned by the chain); while Barnes & Noble-published titles accounted for about 3 percent of chain sales in 1994, vice president Steve Riggio says they will account for 10 percent of sales in a few years. Operating profits remain modest, rising from 2.5 percent in 1992 to 3.1 percent in 1993 (FY ending Jan. 29 1994), though restructuring and expansion costs resulted in losses of $6.2 million over the three years. But operating profits slumped to 1.6 percent in 1994, strained by the continuing costs of closing mall stores and opening new superstores, and the store reported a loss of $35.1 million (-1.8% of sales) in 1995. Superstore sales accounted for 68 percent of revenues, and comparable store sales in the superstore outlets continued to increase even while same-store sales in the stagnant mall store sector fell by 3.8 percent.[35]

Standard & Poor removed Barnes & Noble from its credit watch after the stock sale; shortly afterwards *Forbes* pointed to the "shrinking profit margins and red ink" stemming from Barnes & Noble's intense competition with Borders, Crown and Books-A-Million to dominate the superstore business.[36] But other analysts see a brighter future. Barnes & Noble's corporate report points to the company's transformation "from a very mature mall-based bookseller to a dynamic 'superstore' operation," while Paine Webber had said the focus on superstores should enable the company to put its "erratic" earnings history behind it, but lowered its rating from buy to neutral at the end of 1995 – sparking a next-day 10 percent fall in B&N stock prices. The stock has traded erratically, with a 52-week range from $21.62 to $42.25 a share, closing at $33.25 July 19th.[37]

Borders Group

In 1984 Kmart purchased Waldenbooks, then the country's largest bookstore chain (since relegated to second place by the merger of B. Dalton and Barnes & Noble), from the Carter-Hawley-Hale department store chain. Founded in 1933, Waldenbooks was then the fifteenth largest specialty store chain in the country, operating more stores – located in shopping malls and similar high-traffic locations – than any other bookstore chain and accounting for 15.2 percent of all bookstore sales.[38] Kmart bought Waldenbooks for $300 million as part of controversial diversification efforts which saw it expand from its traditional discount store business to specialty ventures including drug, shoe and home improvement stores (Kmart sold off the Borders Group and other specialty stores last year as part of restructuring efforts to concentrate on its faltering core business).[39] In announcing the Waldenbooks acquisition to stockholders, Kmart reported:

> our analysis indicated that the book business was an above average growth business, particularly for a large operator... Waldenbooks' information distribution network is... one of the most advanced in the industry and our new book return distribution network allows us to return books from all our book store locations to the publishers in a more cost effective manner. These are important behind-the-scenes keys to profitability in the book business.[40]

Waldenbooks was best known for its marketing orientation. In 1984 Vice President Bonnie Predd boasted that Waldenbooks "decided to violate the canons of bookselling and treat books like marketable merchandise ... to market books like toothpaste and laundry detergent."[41] This effort involved redesigned stores, theme promotions, "book clubs" (offering discounts to repeat purchasers of genre fiction), extensive advertising campaigns, and MTV-like book promotions on video monitors in selected stores. (Publishers, of course, footed the bill for most of these promotions.)[42] Waldenbooks continues to use extensive point-of-purchase displays, discount pricing on selected titles, a "Preferred Reader" frequent-buyer program offering discounts and rebates to Waldenbooks and Brentano's customers (and an associated affinity credit card which gives credit towards future book purchases based upon volume of billings), and other in-store promotions to boost sales. (The Preferred Reader program also generates a valuable database that the chain can use for targeted direct mailing and other promotions.) Among Waldenbooks' in-store promotions is the "Waldenbooks Recommends" program – a single title racked in front of cash registers to encourage impulse buying. These books are selected not for literary merit but because the chain feels they have particularly wide-scale appeal. In the mid-1980s publishers paid $3,000 per title per week to participate in the program.[43]

Yet despite this aggressive marketing, disappointing sales forced Walden to "temper" its once-aggressive expansion program – opening fewer than 100 new outlets in 1989, and beginning to close stores in the early 1990s.[44] Waldenbooks had developed a reputation for carrying fewer titles than other bookstores and allowing new books only a few weeks to demonstrate their sales potential before returning slow-moving titles to publishers for credit. Although backlist (books published more than six months before) sales had accounted for nearly two-thirds of Walden sales in 1980, that figure was trimmed to 35 percent by 1986 and the chain was considering dropping two-thirds of its remaining back-list titles.[45] Waldenbooks' approach was widely perceived to have transformed the industry. The chains, the *Wall Street Journal* reported, push "sure-fire winners to the detriment of most of the other 40,000 new hard-cover titles that come onto the market every year."[46] Although all chains "concentrate primarily on commercial books... Waldenbooks in particular is known for a merciless lack of patience" with new authors and other slow sellers.[47]

In 1987, the chain operated 1,179 Waldenbooks outlets (including 50 U.S. Coles stores bought that year from the Canadian chain); seven Waldenbooks & More, eight Waldensoftware, 28 Waldenkids and 18 Brentano's outlets; and serviced book departments in Kmart stores.[48] (Waldenbooks converted most Brentano's outlets into Waldenbooks after buying the chain in 1984, but later began opening new Brentano's as an up-scale mall store brand enabling it to operate two bookstores in selected malls.[49]) In 1992 Kmart added Borders Books – a small but rapidly growing superstore operator – to its portfolio. Borders superstores feature a substantially larger selection of books and music (an average of 128,000 books and 57,000 CDs) than its chief competitor, Barnes & Noble, reflecting management's origins operating the large, full-service independent bookstore from which the chain was built in the 1980s. Under Kmart ownership, Borders grew from 19 to 75 stores (while shrinking Waldenbooks from a peak of nearly 1,300 stores to 1,127 at the close of fiscal 1994 – further closings are underway).[50]

The Borders acquisition marked a dramatic change of course. While the Waldenbooks approach dovetailed nicely with publishers' publicity and promotion campaigns for the leading new titles, it could not respond to consumer demand for a broader selection and for access to titles published more than a few months before. Waldenbooks' mall sales were stagnant when Kmart bought Borders, and the chain was barely covering its expenses. But Kmart was unable to raise the capital to finance Borders' aggressive expansion (or to meet its own needs to revive its faltering department stores), and under investor pressure it sold Borders in two 1995 stock offerings for nearly $245 million, substantially less than it paid to purchase the chains. The now-independent Borders Group operates bookstores under the Borders, Brentano's and Waldenbooks names, as well as the 10-store Planet Music chain and Borders Press (formerly Longmeadow; issues 190 public-domain, self-help and hobbyist titles a year for sale in Borders Group stores).

The Borders-Walden group reported losses of $61.2 million in 1993 (after a $142.8 million restructuring charge associated with the closing of several stores), and a profit of just $20.9 million in 1992 (1.9 percent of sales). Profits were healthier in 1994 – $64 million, 4.2 percent of sales – after the closing of 200 unprofitable Walden outlets and increased superstore sales. However, Borders management slashed overhead expenses, reduced staffing levels and revamped its re-ordering system for the mall stores, which account for the bulk of operating profits.[51] Borders reported a $211.1 million loss for 1995 (including a $201.8 million write-down of goodwill) despite increasing sales to $1,749 million (reflecting a 65.7 percent increase in sales in its superstore division, but a 5 percent decline at mall outlets).[52] The mall and superstore divisions have radically different operations. More than two-thirds of Borders' book sales are of books that sell only one copy (or less) per store per month, requiring larger inventory and relatively slow stock turn. But the majority of mall store sales are of best sellers and other impulse items, and over 90 percent of sales are from the chain's top 15,000 titles.[53] Borders continues to cannabilize the Waldenbooks division to finance the expansion of its Borders superstores.[54]

While Borders remains unprofitable, it is highly regarded by analysts. Alex. Brown & Sons "recommend[s] aggressive current purchase" of Borders stock, while Goldman, Sachs & Co. rates it a "moderate outperformer... in the early stages of an exciting growth phase." Donaldson, Lufkin & Jenrette gives Borders Group an outperform rating, attributing its performance to "a well trained staff focused on providing the customer with the best experience in this segment... employee empowerment and a culture attuned to success." Borders hires most workers on a full-time basis, requiring them to pass book or music knowledge exams before being hired. A substantial majority of workers have college degrees. But while the stores' highly trained workforce may well be central to Borders' prospects, there is growing evidence of employee dissatisfaction. The Industrial Workers of the World narrowly lost a National Labor Relations Board election at Borders' Central Philadelphia superstore, and the United Food and Commercial Workers have petitioned for an election at Borders' flagship Ann Arbor, Michigan store. Borders management responded to the IWW campaign with a series of captive meetings designed to undermine support for unionization, and sent an email message to all Borders managers alerting them to the IWW organizing drive. The message backfired at at least two stores when it found its way to workers, some of whom called the IWW in to organize their store. Shortly after the election, Borders fired a member of the IWW organizing committee, sparking picketing at Borders stores across the country. A leaflet distributed at Borders' downtown Boston store charged Borders with

> trying to terrorize union supporters... across the country by firing the most visible union militants. The pretext for that firing was deliberately flimsy, lest any worker miss the point that joining the union might cost them their job...[55]

Borders workers start at $6.25 an hour, although full-time workers receive health insurance coverage. Meanwhile, in 1995 Borders' top two executives received $790,000 each (excluding stock options) and held Borders stock worth more than $28 million dollars (excluding long-term stock options).[56]

Crown Books

Crown Books, a rising star a few years ago, is now a distant (and down-sizing) runner-up with just $283.5 million in sales (down from $305.6 million the year before) and 172 stores at the close of 1995 (down from 240 in 1993). Crown continues closing stores as it converts operations from its small strip-mall outlets to the larger SuperCrown format, though it recently backed off plans to withdraw from the Houston market. (At 12,000 to 35,000 square feet SuperCrowns are much smaller than the other leading chains' superstores; regular Crown outlets run between 2,000 to 3,000 square feet.)[57] Crown discounts its entire stock and operates clusters of stores in and around seven large cities (Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, San Diego, Houston and Seattle), concentrated to maximize advertising productivity. The chain experienced meteoric growth in the early 1980s, but was hit by the growth of competing discounters and pre-emptive discounting by other chains.[58] Crown Books is controlled by the Dart Group (which in turn is controlled by Herbert Haft), which owns 51.4 percent of Crown stock. (Dart also owns Trak Auto [an auto parts chain], Total Beverage Corp. and 50 percent of the Shoppers Food Warehouse chain.)[59] Crown nearly collapsed in 1994, riven by a high-profile battle between founder Robert Haft and his father, who holds a controlling interest in the bookstore chain. The younger Haft was ultimately forced from Crown Books, though not without winning a $34 million jury award (currently under appeal) for wrongful dismissal; the faltering chain's sales have been tumbling ever since and Crown executives have spent much of their time addressing what the annual report terms "extensive" disputes involving the Haft family. However, the chain reported a modest $5.7 million profit in 1995, and is reporting increased sales in its SuperCrown stores.[60]

Crown sells books, magazines and computer software; discounting its entire stock from 10 to 35 percent. Stores are located in low-rent areas, clustered in metropolitan areas for concentrated advertising and distribution. Crown originally offered only a very limited number of titles, relying on discounts to draw patrons and high-volume sales to make up for margins narrowed by discounting. By stocking only best-sellers and other "sure-fire" books, Crown held its return rate down to ten percent, far below the sector's typical one-in-three returns ratio. Crown and the imitators it spawned transformed the industry in the 1980s, undermining the viability of the narrow selections and list prices that characterized many bookstores. But in the face of increased competition from other discounters and superstores, Crown began aggressively closing smaller stores a few years ago to open SuperCrown outlets, which combine discounting with selections more comparable to those in other chains' smaller superstores.[61]

Six years after Robert Haft opened his first Crown Books outlet, the ABA's *American Bookseller* published a study on the impact of Crown's 30 Washington, D.C.-area stores on local booksellers. Although Crown contended that it did not compete with other bookstores (a claim echoed by all the chains), instead attracting people who would not ordinarily buy books, ten small, suburban booksellers had been forced out of business by competition from nearby Crown outlets. Booksellers reported sales down by 35 to 60 percent over previous levels in Crown's wake. Of 16 independent suburban stores to survive, only nine were healthy – none of which competed directly with a Crown outlet. The ABA report concluded that to survive competition from discounters stores needed either a large selection, a high-traffic location, or a specialty inadequately served by the chains.[62] But it is far from clear that Crown itself will be able to survive competition from Barnes & Noble, Borders and Books-A-Million.

Books-A-Million

The most profitable of the superstore chains is Books-A-Million, a regional retailer which is quickly closing in on Crown Books. B-A-M sales for 1995 were $229.8 million, up 33 percent from the preceding year (1994 sales were $172.4 million, up 40 percent from the preceding year), though profits slipped to 5.3 percent. The chain operates 129 stores in 17 states, including 80 smaller mall stores under the Bookland name and 49 superstores under the Books-A-Million and Books & Co. (in Dayton, Ohio) names, and also owns American Wholesale Book Company. Books-A-Million only recently emerged from the shadows as a regional bookstore chain, catapulting itself into the ranks of the leading chains by developing a string of superstores in the South and buying the Bookland chain (which was the fourth largest bookstore chain in 1987, operating 73 stores). It bought the two-store Books & Co. chain for $3.3 million in 1994.[63]

Like its competitors, B-A-M is expanding its superstore operations while working to trim its mall operations to 72 stores. But unlike its competitors, Books-A-Million has largely avoided expensive store closings and restructuring, consistently reporting the highest profit margins of any major chain. B-A-M raised $67 million in two stock offerings in the early 1990s (the founding Anderson family retains majority ownership) to pay off its debt and finance new expansion. While Books-A-Million is far behind market-leading Barnes & Noble and Borders, its strong southeastern base has made it a regional powerhouse. When Alabama won the Sugar Bowl in 1993, the Birmingham-based chain persuaded *Sports Illustrated* to publish a special edition featuring the team by agreeing to buy 200,000 copies, non-returnable. Books-A-Million lures customers in with deep discounts on best-sellers, but sells most books at full price. Its superstores offer about 68,000 titles, substantially less than most Barnes & Noble and Borders outlets, but feature a large selection of regional titles. However, *Publishers Weekly* quotes one distributor as saying "There isn't a good selection in all BAM stores, because so many publishers aren't shipping to them" because the chain takes six to eight months to pay (industry terms are 30 days).[64]

B-A-M superstores give prominent space to tables of books at deep discount (40 to 90 percent), organized by areas of interest (rather than by price, as is the policy for bargain books at most chain operations). The chain offers its own frequent buyer program, the Millionaire's Club, offering B-A-M customers 10 percent discounts, and a Read & Save program for Bookland customers where they receive a $10 rebate for every $100 spend in those stores.

However, while B-A-M stock continues to do quite well, some market analysts have begun to cast doubt upon the company's long-term prospects as the larger Borders and Barnes & Noble chains invade B-A-M's southern small-town base, which the chain long had to itself. Barnes & Noble, in particular, has targeted the South for new superstores. Some analysts believe Books-A-Million's heavy reliance upon best-sellers (which account for about a twelfth of sales, about twice the level of Barnes & Noble) make the chain particularly vulnerable to publishing trends. The small to mid-sized cities where B-A-M is concentrated "can't support the competition," says Turner Investment Partners portfolio manager Bill Chenoweth, explaining why he sold the fund's 30,420 shares. Munder Capital Management is also skittish about B-A-M's ability to survive heightened competition in its core markets, selling about half of its 322,000 shares.[65]

Rounding out the top five is the Lauriat's/Encore combination resulting from Lauriat's purchase of the Encore bookstore chain in late 1994. Lauriat's bought the 94-store Encore chain for $18 million and the 13-store Book Corner chain the same year. The resulting 153-store chain focuses on smaller, neighborhood stores throughout the New England and mid-Atlantic areas, though it also operates a few superstores. Lauriat's operates stores under the Lauriat's, Royal Discount, DeWolfe & Fiske, Encore and Book Corner names. The chain is privately owned by Thomas H. Lee & Co., a buyout fund which also owns General Nutrition Centers, Continental Cable and Chadwick-Miller, a housewares and gift importer. Lee formerly owned Snapple Beverage Co., EquiCredit, and several other firms.[66]

There are hundreds of smaller bookstore chains, most confined to a single metropolitan area with fewer than five outlets. In 1986 only two of the fourth through twelfth largest bookstore chains operated even 100 outlets – and one of those was a franchise operation (Little Professor). Combined, those chains accounted for only 7.7 percent of total estimated book store sales, about one-fourth the market share enjoyed by the three dominant firms.[67] A number of smaller chains also exist, ranging from special-interest chains featuring children's, religious or health-related books to paperback and full-line bookstores operating on local, regional and national levels.[68]

Implications of Chain Ownership

> The chains act like censors... If they don't want to carry a book it disappears... Small publishers don't have the clout to get into the chains... The chains sell shelf space like supermarkets sell Jell-O... [They] don't care what product they sell... it could be hamburger. —publisher Lyle Stuart[69]

As the leading superstore chains continue their march to market dominance, they are leaving in their wake a string of independent booksellers who lacked the financial resources necessary to survive against competitors with the financial resources to lose millions of dollars in order to break into and dominate local book markets. But the leading chains did not develop this dominant position by being more successful at selling books. Quite the contrary, before the advent of the superstores (modeled on the full-service independent booksellers they are now cannibalizing), several independent bookstores and regional chains did substantially more business per store than did their giant competitors. In 1987, Barnes & Noble/B. Dalton averaged $950,000 in revenues per store – a figure boosted by extremely high volumes in Barnes & Noble's discount outlets. Waldenbooks, with less selection and fewer high-volume outlets, averaged $641,026 per store. Crown Books, which relied on volume sales to offset its discounting, posted sales of $824,390 per outlet. In contrast, Kroch's & Brentano's – then a full-service chain with 17 stores, all in the Chicago area – averaged sales of $2.8 million per store (the chain has since collapsed in the face of superstore competition).[70] Two other chains (Doubleday and Bookstop – both now part of Barnes & Noble) boasted sales in excess of $1 million annually per outlet, while only three of the top twelve chains reported sales levels significantly lower than Waldenbooks' that year.[71] With their growing superstore operations, of course, per-store sales have increased dramatically at the chains. In 1995, Borders superstore outlets averaged $5.9 million per store (mall stores averaged about one million in sales), compared to $4.2 million for Barnes & Nobles' more numerous but smaller superstore outlets (and about $912,000 for its mall outlets).[72]

Barnes & Noble/B. Dalton and Borders/Walden now control nearly half of the bookstore market, and with smaller national, regional and local chains control a solid majority of the retail bookstore market even though a substantial majority of stores continue to be owned by independent operators. The national chains exercise an influence on the market disproportionate to their numbers, however. Their high-traffic locations and lavish advertising budgets have enabled the chains to stake out a dominant position, especially in the lucrative best-seller market. Indeed, some best-seller lists ignore sales by independent booksellers altogether. The *Wall Street Journal* compiles its list almost entirely from the four largest chains, while the vast majority of the 3,000 bookstores included in *USA Today*'s best-seller list are chain outlets (although the paper claims to weight the data to compensate for this).[73]

But there is substantial evidence that the chains do not buy books from the same range of publishers or on the same basis as do the independent booksellers who dominated the retail industry until recently. B. Dalton made national news in 1988 by notifying nearly 500 publishers that it would no longer buy directly from them. The decision affected all publishers doing less than $100,000 annually in business with the chain, in a move B. Dalton claimed was intended

> to increase the opportunities for small publishers to sell to our chain.... We are not in the business of denying access to the world of ideas represented by publishers and authors – no matter what the size of their balance sheet or their credentials.[74]

Despite such reassurances many publishers were concerned. "It's not going to put us out of business," explained Kenneth Arnold, director of Rutgers University Press, one of the affected publishers,

> but it puts one more barrier in the very littered landscape between the publisher and the book buyer. The visibility in the chains is very important, especially because in many parts of the country the chain stores are the only places that you can get a book.[75]

The superstores are friendlier to independent publishers than the mall-based operations, if only because of the need to fill their shelves, but they rarely buy directly from independent publishers. Instead, the chains buy such titles through wholesalers. As a result, independent publishers lose 10 to 15 percent of their margin, and suffer delayed payments (Ingram, one of the country's largest distributors, has been accused of returning books just before invoices come due, only to reorder them a few days later). But, as publisher David Godine notes, "you can't afford to not be in superstores, ... [and] you can't do business today without Ingram."[76] Although independent book sellers are still important in launching books,

> most publishers agree that the chains' support eventually becomes essential. "To get a book to sell extremely well, you need good display space in the chains," says Joseph Friedman, vice president, sales, for Arbor House Publishing Co.[77]

Michael Hejny, a book buyer for B. Dalton, explained that while "merit has a lot to do with certain kinds of books... most of the time it's not the most important consideration." Instead he looked for "brand-name" authors who can be counted upon for sure-fire best sellers, value pricing, striking covers, and publisher support (including advertising and funds for in-store promotions).[78] While the superstores have reduced their original reliance on a handful of top-selling titles, they continue to dominate this sector.

As the superstores run out of new markets to penetrate, they are being forced into smaller and smaller markets, and into head-to-head competition on each others' home turf. Thus, Borders is in the process of opening its first store in Barnes & Noble's long-time stronghold of Manhattan, N.Y., while Barnes & Noble is invading Books-A-Million's territory in the South – and both are entering smaller markets such as Portland, Oregon, which now has more bookstores per capita than New York City.[79]

The resulting demise of once-prominent independent booksellers has many smaller publishers worried. One literary publisher terms the situation "a disaster." "My best customers... are going out of business right and left." Instead of offering a greater variety of books, he says, "you are getting a greater *number* of the *same kinds* of books... but the choice is diminishing..." Another said the superstores stocked his titles, but would not give them the support necessary to promote sales without promotional payments he could not afford. (Indeed, one publisher complained of books sitting unsold on superstore shelves for years, before being returned in badly damaged condition.) Publishing house executives are reluctant to comment on the record, but one anonymous sales director was quoted by *Publishers Weekly* saying the industry faced "the most serious bookselling situation ever, much more serious than the mall chain expansion of the 1970s..." While Barnes & Noble and Borders fight it out in markets incapable of supporting both, he continued, "the real loser in this battle will be the independents," unable to compete with superstores willing to sell books at a loss in order to establish long-term market dominance. In the end, he predicted, independent quality bookstores will go out of business, and publishers will find themselves forced to sell most of their books to five chain buyers, many with little knowledge of books or readers.[80]

Some of the largest trade publishers report that direct sales to independents now account for slightly more than 10 percent of new book sales (although additional purchases would be funneled through distributors). Because publishers rely on the chains to launch new titles, the bookstore chains have been able to exact favorable terms which, independents charge, have largely financed their expansion and discounts. "No discussion of the influence of large bookselling chains," Maxwell Lillienstein of the American Booksellers Association noted several years ago,

> would be complete without reference to the favorable prices given them by virtually all

> publishers... prices [which] permit the chains to plough the resulting profits into more branches, more price-cutting, more advertising, and more in-store promotions.[81]

At the time, this discount amounted to an additional 7.3 percent over the prices available to independent booksellers, allegedly based upon the larger quantities ordered by the chains. In an anti-trust lawsuit brought by the Northern California Booksellers Association against Avon Publishers, a federal court ruled that Avon could not justify the larger discounts, finding persuasive the claim that they were granted "in response to pressure from the chains" and unfairly contributed to chain growth and profitability.[82]

While the bookstore chains, with their hundreds of outlets, do place large orders with publishers, these are often separately shipped to stores across the country in quantities no greater than those received by many independent booksellers (and far smaller than the quantities ordered by some of the larger independents who are nonetheless denied the advantageous discounts; however, the chains are increasingly turning to regional warehouses in order to facilitate transferring books among their stores and to justify larger discounts). Crown Books demanded, and received, the chain discount when it had only four stores, taking advantage of the more generous terms to make possible its deep discounting and finance its rapid expansion.[83] Publishers who refuse these terms find it difficult to sell their books. Publisher Lawrence Hill reports that chains have refused to carry his books because he does not offer the larger discounts.[84] When Doubleday – one of the country's largest publishers, now part of the Bertelsmann conglomerate – announced in 1974 that it would stop granting extra discounts to chains, B. Dalton stopped ordering Doubleday titles altogether while Waldenbooks cut back on orders. Doubleday capitulated within the year.[85] Since then the chains have dramatically increased their market share, and hence their bargaining power.

Analyst Leonard Shatzkin agrees that these higher discounts are frequently contrived, and that chains "depend heavily on the discount advantage" to sustain profitability.[86] Maxwell Lillienstein calculated that publisher's discriminatory discounts trim gross margins by a minimum of 5.25 percent – "in most cases... the difference between moderately profitable operation and extinction."[87] Six years ago the Federal Trade Commission filed antitrust complaints against six of the country's largest publishers, charging them with granting the chains favored treatment in the form of larger discounts and promotional dollars.[88] Trade press reports indicate that an undisclosed settlement has been negotiated (but not yet approved by the Commission), but frequently promised announcements of the details of that settlement have yet to appear.[89] Another anti-trust investigation is underway into allegations that Barnes & Noble and Borders collude in deciding which mall stores to close.[90]

The chains have successfully used their marketing power not only to demand larger discounts and promotional support, but also to entice publishers to cut list prices or change covers on particular titles in pursuit of larger orders. Promotional support is an especially contentious issue, as publishers pay the bulk of the substantial advertising costs incurred by chain operators. "The publishers, in effect, are also buying desirable store display space," the *Wall Street Journal* noted. "A 'regular' book... is guaranteed high-visibility display in the stores, while 'promotional' books are stacked on the front-right display tables."[91] In 1988, publishers paid all but 15 percent of Crown Books' $4.2 million advertising budget.[92] An internal Barnes & Noble document from 1993 illustrates the range of promotional programs available to publishers. Barnes & Noble sold space in its weekly advertisements in the *New York Times* and other papers (advertised books are also guaranteed prominent display space at store front) and literary magazines. Page 1 reviews in Barnes & Noble's newsletter/catalog, *Review & Preview of Books,* can be bought for $8,000 (reviews and features inside the publication are $3,000). B. Dalton stores will feature titles as "Book of the Week" for a $3,000 payment. A payment of $18,500 guarantees books best-seller treatment in superstores (Barnes & Nobles declares books best-sellers before publication, offering them at a deeper discount than on other new titles; $12,000 buys "bestseller pricing" and display for a month in B. Dalton outlets). Books could be guaranteed placement in the "New & Noteworthy" or "New Arrivals" sections for just $3,500 per title. More recently, the *New York Times* reported that publishers paid $1,500 to participate in Barnes & Noble's "Discover Great New Writers" program (including face-out placement near the front of the store and a posted mini-review; the program generates $150,000 in revenues a year), $10,000 a month for front-of-store space for cardboard display units, $3,000 a month for end-of-aisle displays, etc. Publishers' promotional payments finance the chains' aggressive advertising, enabling them to reach customers in a way independent booksellers cannot hope to match. Barnes & Noble reports that publishers pay 100 percent of the cost of its consumer advertising. The *Times* reported that Borders stood to bring in more than twice as much from publishers as it spent for advertising space for a recent Christmas season promotion.[93]

Thus, despite the fact that independent and regional booksellers still account for the bulk of bookstore sales, publishers have adopted policies that offer a wide range of competitive advantages to the largest chains. One publisher's sales executive ("who spoke on condition of anonymity, expressing fear of commercial retribution") told the *New York Times* that publishers are "forced to buy into these kinds of programs, even for books that would do well on their own, just so that when we do have a book or an author who needs extra exposure, they're willing to accommodate it." Many independent booksellers have been severely squeezed by this competition, handicapped by smaller discounts and their inability to secure publisher-funded promotional budgets. In response, the American Booksellers Association has repositioned itself as a voice for independent booksellers, encouraging the FTC investigation and filing its own anti-trust suits against five publishers in May 1994 and against Random House in January 1996. The Random House suit parallels the FTC complaint, seeking an injunction requiring the publisher to offer independent booksellers the same wholesale price and promotional allowances given the chains. The ABA had held off on suing Random House because of the pending settlement. "But the terms have never been announced, and we got tired of waiting for it to happen," said ABA director Bernie Rath. The Association singled out Random House as the worst offender of those investigated by the Commission, offering chain stores discounts four percentage points more than those offered to independents. Random House responded by withdrawing from the ABA's annual convention and trade show.[94]

The other ABA suit charged publishers Houghton Mifflin, Hugh Lauter Levin, Penguin USA, Rutledge Hill and St. Martin's (none of them part of the FTC investigation) with offering preferential terms and conditions to the national bookstore chains and warehouse buying clubs, making special payments for favorable book placement, making payments to chains to promote books as if they were bestsellers, and offering discounts to warehouse clubs so deep that they can sell books to the public at prices lower than the lowest wholesale rates available to booksellers. "By granting favorable terms to only a few accounts," ABA past president Chuck Robinson charged, "these publishers have given a select group of voices the ability to make themselves heard over and above their competitors, distorting the level playing field and free market of ideas." The ABA suit seeks an injunction prohibiting the anti-competitive practices.[95] ABA president Avid Domnitz describes "secret deals, phone bestsellers and illegal promotional allowance payments" as a "cancer" undermining independent booksellers and their ability to offer a diverse selection of reading material to the public.[96]

The ABA subsequently settled with Hugh Lauter Levin, Penguin and Houghton Mifflin, which denied wrongdoing but paid hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Association for legal fees and agreed to make books available to distributors serving bookstores at the same terms available to warehouse clubs and to permit independents to group buy for larger discounts.[97] The remaining defendants have been unsuccessful in their efforts to have the suit dismissed or stayed pending FTC action on its antitrust suit.[98] The ABA suit was preceded by a series of letters in the *American Bookseller* protesting publishers' policies. One bookseller noted that Barnes & Noble was selling the *Columbia Encyclopedia 5th Edition* (list price $125) for $75, slightly less than the actual cost to retail bookstores. Even though publisher Houghton Mifflin's discount schedule listed a maximum 47% discount, Barnes & Noble had secured a 60% discount for its 12,000 copy order. Another bookseller protested that Rizzoli International offered books at a 50% discount to gift stores and other non-bookstore retailers, but offered a maximum discount of 43.7% to booksellers.[99] And while publishers maintain that they have eliminated differential discount schedules, independent booksellers continue to occasionally receive errant invoices documenting deeper discounts for chain booksellers. When Stuart Brent Books received a packing slip showing an extra two percentage points over wholesaler Baker & Taylor's published discount schedule, ABA executive director Bernie Rath seemed resigned, terming it "a typical but not particularly egregious case of a supplier favoring a chain over an independent store;" adding that the ABA's lawsuit documents much wider spreads.[100] While two percentage points may seem trivial, the average operating margin for the four largest chains in 1994 was just 2.1 percent (a figure exceeded only by Books-A-Million) – they lost an average 5.1 percent on sales in 1995 – while their average 1994 profit after restructuring and other non-operating costs was 0.6 percent, virtually identical to the pre-tax profits reported by independent booksellers denied the advantages of these special terms. It is little wonder that many independent booksellers are convinced that they could out-compete the chains, given a level playing field.[101]

Conclusion

> The increasing concentration of trade publishing power in the hands of a few industry giants... enables seven large publishers to command access to the trade channels of distribution... The retail channels of distribution are in turn dominated by five major groups of chain stores.... Industry consolidation has continued to make it hard for independent publishers to gain access to the best-seller lists.[102]

The implications of chain ownership of retail bookstores are especially troubling for small and alternative publishers. Publishing consultant John Huenefeld notes the vital role of small publishers in "keep[ing] alive a healthy intellectual pluralism that will be much diminished if centralization brings the industry under the total domination of a small number of corporate giants." The conglomerates that own the major bookstore chains and wholesalers

> are careful and diplomatic in their public statements of support for small publishers, [but] most are relatively systematic about excluding all but the most promising from access to the huge consumer and library book markets they dominate.[103]

While entry into publishing remains relatively easy, distribution of small publishers' titles is another matter – a concern raised by witnesses before the Federal Trade Commission's Symposium on Media Concentration. "Any small publisher who has tried to sell these chains knows full well... [that] chains can't be bothered with setting up small accounts," publisher David R. Godine noted. "The small publishers' inability to secure good distribution... threatens to stifle opinion and competition," added Bernard Rabb of Columbia Publishing Company.[104]

Writing in 1961, Raymond Williams argued for the vital importance of the field of distribution to encouraging responsible publishing and the availability of a diverse array of views. Lamenting the fact that hundreds of (British) towns were "without anything that can be called a decent bookshop," Williams noted that "chain shops apply to books and periodicals simple tests of quantity: below a certain figure they do not consider particular items worth handling. Is this any kind of freedom, or free availability?"[105]

Here in the United States, chain bookstores have their defenders. Daniel Boorstin lauds drugstores, supermarkets and discount book chains for "democratizing" book buying, while Richard Snyder of the publishing giant Simon & Schuster praises the book chains for eliminating the elitism of the book market.[106] The chains, it is argued, bring books to people who otherwise might never encounter them and to towns that were previously without any bookstores whatsoever.[107] Until relatively recently bookstores were, in fact, predominantly clustered in major cities, and the U.S. had fewer bookstores per capita than did Japan or many European countries.[108] Yet while the chains were expanding into shopping centers across the country, hundreds of independent booksellers were simultaneously entering the industry, often undercapitalized but driven by a love for books. So long as they competed on a relatively even footing, these independent booksellers were able to survive, if not exactly prosper.

But independent booksellers continue to be plagued by rising costs and shrinking margins at the same time that the chains have been able to parlay their marketing power into larger discounts and publisher-funded promotions; siphoning off much of the bestseller business independents rely upon to make up for slower-moving titles. No doubt, many independents will survive, particularly those that have been able to develop a specialty or breadth of titles that attracts a loyal customer base. But for most independent booksellers profits are low to nonexistent.

Profits are also low to nonexistent for the leading bookstore chains. However, they continue to enjoy larger discounts and easier access to publisher's advertising dollars for promotions. There is little evidence to indicate that the bookstore chains' steadily increasing share of the retail book market is due to greater efficiency or to effective competition for readers' loyalties. Indeed, under critical scrutiny the leading book chains look more like lumbering dinosaurs incapable of sustaining themselves against their more nimble independent competitors. But fed by large infusions of investment capital and discounts and promotional payments significantly more generous than those available to their competition, the leading chains have been able to destroy their competitors through sheer brute force. The chains' marketing orientation fits in well with changes in the broader publishing industry, as publishers increasingly seek to rationalize operations in order to improve the bottom line. And as independent booksellers develop effective strategies for countering the chains, the bookstore chains are well positioned to adopt them for themselves, just as they have used their economic leverage to dominate the superstore approach pioneered by independents in the 1980s.

In short, so long as independent booksellers are unable to secure a level playing field their future seems bleak. Were this simply a matter of small business being displaced by big business, it might be a matter of only passing concern. However, it involves a vital cultural sector, one which plays a central role in the dissemination of ideas. As such, the ongoing concentration of book distribution into ever fewer hands has serious implications upon the ability for new voices to enter the metaphorical marketplace of ideas. It is time to enforce prohibitions against feeding the dinosaurs. Otherwise literary publisher Jane Howle's vision of a future where "you would have the bulk of books bought by just four or five chain buyers," a thought "horrifying to contemplate," may well come to pass.[109]

TABLE ONE
1987 SALES OF TWELVE LEADING U.S. BOOKSTORE CHAINS

Chain	# Stores May 1988	# Stores May 1987	Revenues (millions)	1987 Market Share
Barnes & Noble/B Dalton	1000	995	$950.0	18.0%
Waldenbooks	1248	1100	800.0	15.2
Crown Books	205	201	168.9	3.2
Bookland Stores	101	73	50.0	0.9
Kroch's & Brentano's	17	17	47.0	0.9
Zondervan	83	82	40.0	0.8
Little Professor	114	113	38.7	0.7
Doubleday Book Shops	28	26	34.5	0.7
Lauriat's	40	35	32.0	0.6
Bookstop	17	12	31.5	0.6
Encore	41	40	29.0	0.6
Cokesbury	37	37	22.4	0.4

Source: Jon Bekken, "Concentration in the Retail Book Industry: The Emerging Distribution Monopoly," International Communication Association, 1989.

TABLE TWO
SELECTED PROMOTIONAL PROGRAMS

Barnes & Noble Superstores

Discover Great New Writers – 20 titles displayed face-out with front-of-store placement and featuring a mini-review on the shelf. **Price** $1,500 for two- to three-month period.

Dumps – Front-of-store floor space for corrugated displays. **Price** $10,000 a month.

Endcaps – End-of-aisle displays. **Price** $3,000 a month per book, or $10,000 a month for entire display.

Cafe Table-top Tent Cards – Feature 12 titles each month. **Price** $1,200 with two other titles; $3,000 for full card.

B. Dalton, Doubleday and Scribner's

Bestseller Display – Positioned in the front of store and sold at 15 or 20 percent discount. **Price** $12,000 a month.

New Arrival Wall – Face-out display. **Price** $2,500 for three weeks.

Endcaps – "Own your own" or be one of six titles on a particular theme; face-out display. **Price** $3,000 monthly per title or $10,000 for entire endcap.

Borders Superstores

Original Voices – Positioned in the front of the store and sold at 30 percent discount; listed in Original Voices brochure. **Price** $1,500 to $2,500 monthly, depending on season.

Children's Endcap – Up to five children's titles, sold at 30 percent discount. Borders provides a sign. **Price** $7,760 to $7,900 monthly for entire endcap, depending on season.

Source: Mary Tabor, "In Bookstore Chains, Display Space Is for Sale," *New York Times*, January 15 1996, p. D8.

TABLE THREE

SALES OF LEADING BOOKSTORE CHAINS

(in millions of dollars)

	1992 sales	1993 Sales	Stores	1994 Sales	Stores	1995 Sales	Stores
Barnes & Noble	$1087.0	$1337.4	937	$1622.7	966	1980.0	1013
Borders (Kmart)	1202.0	1370.6		1511.0		1750.0	1108
Crown Books	240.7	275.0	240	305.6	196	283.5	172
Books-a-Million	95.1	123.3	109	172.4	124	229.8	129
Lauriat's/Encore*	65.2	74.5		140.0	162	133.0	153

*1993 is estimate

Sources: Jim Milliot, "Chain Sales Rise 18% in Year; Market Share Increases," *Publishers Weekly*, April 11 1994, p. 8; "1995 Sales Down 7% at Crown Books," *Publishers Weekly*, Feb. 19 1996, p. 112; "Yearly Sales Up At Crown, But Fourth Quarter Weak," *Publishers Weekly*, Feb. 13 1995, p. 13; W. Hood et al., "Kmart Corp. Company Report, Prudential Securities Inc, Aug. 18 1994; A.E. Ryan et al., "Books-A-Million Company Report," Prudential Securities Inc, Nov. 21 1994; Books-A-Million Annual Report 1995; Jim Milliot, "Superstore Strength Results in 21% Sales Increase at B&N," *Publishers Weekly*, Feb. 20 1995, p. 107; Jim Milliot, "Year's Sales at Borders-Walden Jump 10% to Over $1.5 Billion," *Publishers Weekly*, March 6 1995, p. 13; Jim Milliot, "Chains' Margins Improve in 1994," *Publishers Weekly*, July 10 1995, p. 9; "Lauriat's Sales Up 58%; Store Closings Accelerated," *Publishers Weekly*, July 1 1996, p. 10; Jim Milliot, "Sales at Top Four Chains Rose 17% to $4.2 Billion," *Publishers Weekly*, April 1 1996, p. 10.

TABLE FOUR

CHAIN SUPERSTORE SALES

(in millions of dollars)

	1995 Sales	Stores	Increase	1994 Sales	Stores	1993 Sales	Stores	1992 Sales	Stores
Barnes & Noble	$1350.0	322	42%	$953.0	268	$614.6	203	$328.8	135
Borders	683.5	116	66%	425.5	75	244.8	44	123	31
Crown				167.2	70	110	61	50	28
Books-A-Million*				110.0	45	50	26	25	16
TOTAL:				$1,655.7	458	$999.4	334	$526.8	210

*Estimated

Source: "B&N Sales Up 22%, Near $2 Billion," *Publishers Weekly*, February 12 1996, p. 14; "Borders Group, Inc. Announces Year-End Results," News Release, March 11 1996; Jim Milliot, "Superstore Sales Topped $1.6 Billion in '94, 65% Gain Over '93," *Publishers Weekly*, May 15 1995, p. 10; Jim Milliot, "Led by B & N, Superstore Sales Soar to $1 Billion," *Publishers Weekly*, May 16 1994, p. 9.

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1. Walter W. Powell, "Competition versus Concentration in the Book Trade." Journal of Communications, Spring 1980, p. 89.

2. See Maxwell J. Lillienstein, "Charting the Ongoing Concentration of the Book Industry," American Bookseller, February 1986, pp. 63-69; Raymond Sokolov, "Plagued by Rising Costs and Falling Sales, Book Publishers Are in Throes of Change," Wall Street Journal, July 2 1982, p. 24; Irving Louis Horowitz, Communicating Ideas: The Crisis of Publishing in a Post-Industrial Society, New York, Oxford University Press, 1986.

3. Lillienstein, 1986, op cit., p. 63.

4. Maxwell J. Lillienstein, "The Consolidation of the Book Industry," American Bookseller, April 1987, p. 50; 1987 Census of Manufacturers -- Concentration Ratios in Manufacturing, Washington, DC: Bureau of the Census, pp. 6-18.

5. Lillienstein, 1987, op cit., p. 50; Ben Bagdikian, The Media Monopoly (3rd edition), Boston: Beacon Press, 1990, p. 19.

6. "General interest" books defined to include trade books, mass-market paperbacks, and books sold by mail; categories that, Lillienstein argues, "compete with one another for consumer interest." Lillienstein, 1980, op cit., p. 23.

7. See, for example, Paul Hirsch, "U.S. Cultural Productions: The Impact of Ownership," Journal of Communication, Summer 1985, p. 120; Paul Doebler, "The Book Industry, 1981: From Business as Usual to ???," in Book Industry Trends, 1981, New York, Book Industry Study Group, 1981. Benjamin Compaine argues that concentration increases competition: "When a big company takes over a smaller company, they often provide the resources... to publish more competing titles and to, in effect, increase competition." (Federal Trade Commission Bureau of Competition, Proceedings of the Symposium on Media Concentration, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1979, at p. 646.)

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10. David Youngstrom, "Caught in the Middle: The Predicament of the Wholesaler Today," American Bookseller, October 1981, pp. 21-22.

11. John Mutter & Michael Coffen, "Many Unhappy Returns," Publishers Weekly, June 17 1996, pp. 8, 16, 18; Shatzkin, 1982, op cit., p. 7. Shatzkin argued that "in the skimpily stocked stores that make up the majority of retail shops, the selection may be so limited that at least part of the potential clientele has learned not to bother coming in at all."

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13. John P. Dessauer, Inc., "The 1987 ABACUS Financial Profile," American Bookseller, February 1989; Center for Book Research, "The ABACUS Financial Profile," American Bookseller, December 1986.

14. Statistical Service Center, Book Industry Trends 1994, New York: Book Industry Study Group, 1994, pp. 2-11, 2-185. Calculation by author.

15. Gallup 1985 Annual Report on Book Buying, Princeton: The Gallup Organization, Inc., 1985. This report is based upon interviews conducted throughout 1984 with a national sample of 12,000 consumers. Figures have been adjusted to remove mail order outlets.

16. 1992 Census of Retail Trade -- Geographic Area Series, Washington DC: Bureau of the Census, Nov. 1994, Table 2; Carol Miles, "994 ABACUS Expanded," American Bookseller, October 1994, pp. 71-108; "Indie Margins Fall Below 1%," Publishers Weekly, June 17 1996, p. 12; John Dessauer, "ABA Bookstore Financial Profile, 1981," American Bookseller, January 1982, pp. 19, 23 and 36. The 1992 ABACUS survey was conducted in July 1993, and surveys only non-chain ABA member bookstores. The 213 respondents (of 2,000 surveys sent out) operated 242 stores. While the representativeness of this sample is open to serious question, the Census Bureau no longer reports anything but the sketchiest data.

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19. See, e.g., Walter Effron, "A Questionable Deal?" American Bookseller, April 1994, p. 6 (Letter). Another letter in the same issue complains of Rizzoli International Publishers offering books to gift shops at 50 percent discount, but explicitly excluding booksellers (eligible for a maximum 43.7 percent discount) from the offer. Anthony Miksak, "Dilemma Over Discount," p. 6. Discriminatory discounts are the key issue in ongoing litigation between the American Booksellers Association and Random House. See Bernard Rath and Richard Howorth, "Letters: ABA Vs. Random," Publishers Weekly, May 13 1996, p. 10.

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23. Lillienstein, 1986, op cit., p. 63.

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Ryszard Kapuscinski:

Epistemic Responsibility, Narrative Theory and Literary Journalism

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Ryszard Kapuscinski:

Epistemic Responsibility, Narrative Theory and Literary Journalism

The reportage of Polish journalist Ryszard Kapuscinski (b. 1932) has been called "among the most thrilling, innovative, and egregiously underread literary works of the last decade" (Schiff, 1991, 175). As a correspondent for Polish newspapers, journals and the Polish News Agency from the early 1950s to 1981, when he was blacklisted by Poland's communist government for political activities, Kapuscinski reported primarily on political events in the Third World. After being banished from official journalism, he rewrote his conventional reportage using literary techniques and published the rewritten pieces as books and magazine articles. In these, he has said, his goal was to do "more than journalism" (Buford, 1987, 97). During the 1980s and early 1990s, four of his books were translated into English and published in the United States.[1] His journalism has also appeared in American magazines and in the British journal *Granta*.[2] It will be argued in this paper that style and reporting methods found in Kapuscinski's books and later journalism bring into a sharp focus the 30-year critical debate over literary journalism, expose the fundamental flaw in recent attempts to legitimize the craft, and offer rationale for a strategy of using narrative theory and epistemic ethics to judge literary journalism in the postmodern world.

Kapuscinski's work is chosen for study for a number of reasons. First, his later journalism encompasses the range of controversial issues found in varying degrees in the work of better-known American literary journalists. These issues include the application of fiction-writing techniques to nonfiction subjects; a strong personal voice; subjective evaluations of events and persons; composite characters, instances of fabricated scenes, direct quotes, dialogue, and internal thoughts and feelings; and undocumented facts. Second, the epistemological stance that underpins Kapuscinski's journalism reflects that found in much of the recent American literary journalism. Third, his work has received high praise from American book reviewers.[3] And fourth, few studies of contemporary literary journalism have included writers from countries other than the United States.[4]

Literary journalism, which also has been labeled creative nonfiction, New Journalism, and artistic journalism, is printed prose dealing with real, current events. It differs from conventional newspaper and magazine journalism in style, function, subject matter, and epistemology (Connery, 1992, 3-19) Literary journalists use the "story" model of narrative and other stylistic techniques usually associated with fiction writing instead of the informational model of inverted pyramid, expository, and explanatory models of conventional journalism (see Schudson, 1978, 88-120; Adam, 1993, 33-42). They see the function of their journalism to be the communication of "impressions, ideas, and emotions" drawing upon "themes and motifs identified by the writer and revealed in the details of an event or in the manners, morals, and actions of people" (Connery, 1992, 6). The traditional journalistic function, on the other hand, is to inform readers about the objective facts of real-world events. Literary journalism also differs from traditional book-length journalism in that the former explores an event as "meaning," whereas the latter explores it simply as an event (Pizer, 1974; Weber, 1980, 2-3). Moreover, literary journalists see the artistic method as not only style, but also as a way of knowing that is subjective, intuitive, self-conscious, and romantic (Wilkins, 1989; Webb, 1974, 38-43).

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The epistemology of conventional journalism is rooted in logical positivism (Gans, 1980, 184); literary journalists, in contrast, reject the belief in a "real-world" that can be discovered by empirical methods (Eason, 1982). Reality for conventional journalists is a concrete, empirically discoverable outside world; there is more than one reality for literary journalists and each is socially and culturally constructed (Eason, 1982).[5]

Ryszard Kapuscinski and Literary Journalism

Kapuscinski employs the range of literary techniques common to literary journalists, including narrative structure, dialogue, irony, and symbolic representation, but the defining characteristic of his style is his use of voice (see Sims and Kramer, 1995, 5-6). His books, *Shah of Shahs*, about the Iranian revolution that brought Khomeini to power, and *The Emperor*, about the fall of Ethiopian monarch Haile Selassie, for example, are organized around his pursuit of their respective stories.

The opening of *Shah* describes Kapuscinski surveying the clutter of old photographs, unorganized notes, unfinished letters, cassette recordings of interviews, and other documentation he has collected during his stay in Iran. "Now, at the very thought of trying to put everything in order (because the day I'm to leave is approaching), I am overcome by both aversion and profound fatigue," Kapuscinski writes (4). The chaos of his room reflects the confusion and upheaval outside his hotel room where the early effects of fanaticism are reigning in the wake of Khomeini's coming to power. Significantly, the mess in his room holds what information he has collected about the revolution that has recently ended: "On the floor, chairs, table, desk lie heaps of index cards, scraps of paper, notes so hastily scrawled and chaotic, I have to stop and think where I jotted down the sentence . . ." (3) The book develops as he sifts through the artifacts of his research to put the information into order. He organizes the facts he has researched, witnessed, and heard about, giving meaning to the profusion of events, self-consciously creating a reality he will share with the world.

In *Emperor*, Kapuscinski's first sentence is "In the evenings I listened to those who had known the Emperor's court" (4). The book alternates chapters written in his voice with chapters that are long monologues purporting to be direct quotations from people he has interviewed. In his chapters, which are distinguished from chapters written in the voice of his sources by being printed in italics, he describes his reporting process, his relationship with his sources, and the events he has experienced. He also gives background and contextual information, as well as personal observations and opinions. The underlying structure of the book is formed by his efforts to report the story.

The Soccer War, which is a collection of reportage, travel writing, and memoir, is unified by Kapuscinski's dominating authorial voice. He enters his reporting as a character. He is "the foreign correspondent," seeking information, trying to reach remote localities closed to foreigners, interviewing sources, observing events, feeling the fatigue and fear that natives of the countries experienced, barely escaping with his life from dangerous confrontations with government soldiers and rebels alike. In Tegucigalpa, Honduras, "I hurried to the hotel, burst into my room, fed a piece of paper into the typewriter and tried to write a dispatch to Warsaw," Kapuscinski writes in "The Soccer War," his report of a short-lived war between Honduras and El Salvador (*The Soccer War*, 160). His persona is always present; we see the world through his eyes, experience events through his subjectivity, even when the foreign correspondent does not enter the narrative. "The Child-Support Bill in the Tanganyikan Parliament," for example, is primarily a string of what Kapuscinski presents as long direct quotes from Tanganyikan legislators during debate on a bill that would require fathers of children born out of wedlock to financially support the children. Kapuscinski remains outside the text, but he is there, urging the reader through his selection, introductions to, and organization of the quotes to perceive the irony in the statements: "According to Delegate B. Akindu (Kigoma), the child-support bill would create 'a special danger for wealthy people, such as for instance delegates to parliament, because pregnant girls will be able to falsely proclaim that the fathers of these illegitimate children are government ministers and delegates to parliament . . . '" (*The Soccer War*, 90). His introductory phrase that begins "according to" as well as the statements juxtaposition to statements in support of the bill give ironic meaning to the delegate's statement.

Kapuscinski's use of authorial voice, in particular his chronicle of the reporting process, reflects the thematic preoccupation documented by Eason (1995) in the works of literary journalists Joan Didion, Norman Mailer, and Hunter Thompson, who "describe what it feels like to live in a world where there is no consensus about a frame of reference to explain 'what it all means'" and "call attention to reporting as a way of joining writer and reader together in the creation of reality" (Sims, 1990, 192-193). Kapuscinski, too, invokes conventional ways of understanding to underscore the inability of traditional communication to ultimately answer the beguiling question, "Is this real?" When reporting on the overthrow of Algerian president Ahmed Ben Bella, for example, Kapuscinski notes that four local newspapers give four different versions of what happened when Ben Bella was deposed, and asserts that the various versions "are all journalistic invention" (*The Soccer War*, 97). In *Shah*, Iranian television, like so often in other countries, Kapuscinski recalls, fails to communicate the ideas, emotions, and desires of the Iranians: "All over the world, at any hour, on a million screens an infinite number of people are saying something to us, trying to convince us of something, gesturing, making faces, getting excited, smiling, nodding their heads, pointing their fingers, and we don't know what it's about" (*Shah of Shahs*, 10).

But Kapuscinski's work reveals additional functions of the personal voice in literary journalism. The authorial presence is integral to the epistemology of Kapuscinski's journalism and to the establishment of his credibility. In the postmodern world, traditional objective conventions for creating social meaning have proven unreliable and the division between the universal and the individual collapses (Kvale, in Anderson, 1995, 19-20). In Kapuscinski's case, he rejects Marxist-Leninist ideology (*The Soccer War*, 83-84). What one is left with, then, is a personal, subjective interpretation of reality. As Hellmann asserts, "almost by definition, new journalism is a revolt by the individual against homogenized forms of experience, against monolithic versions of truth" (1981, 8). Unless he or she champions the individual over the conventional, institutionalized versions of reality, "a journalist merely places new facts into old formulas. The new journalist seeks not only new facts, but also the new ideas and forms through which they can develop a new meaning, and therefore perhaps approach a truth" (Hellmann, 1981, 8).

Kapuscinski recalls traveling along a Nigerian road "where they say no white man can come back alive" because only through direct experience could he know the world. "I was driving to see if a white man could [come back alive], because I had to experience everything for myself. . . . I had to do it myself because I knew no one could describe it to me" (*The Soccer War*, 130). In this, Kapuscinski mirrors the road trips of Hunter

Thompson (see, e.g., *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas: A Savage Journey to the Heart of the American Dream*, 1975) and the personal, participatory reportage of Tim Cahill (*Jaguars Ripped My Flesh: Adventure is a Risky Business*, 1987) and Ted Kerasote (*Navigations*, 1989). Essentially, writing literature, an intensely personal act, rather than objective conventional journalism is a way for Kapuscinski and other literary journalists to know the world. With the demise of universal laws, individual and local narratives become singularly significant, according to Kvale, which helps explain the epistemological value in rejecting interviews with representatives of social authority in favor of hearing the stories of routine life, which is a defining characteristic of literary journalists (Sims and Kramer, 1995), and the value in writing literature. "Art [literary journalism included] is not merely an aesthetic experience, but a way of knowing the world" (Kvale, in Anderson, 1995, 23).

During a published interview, Kapuscinski recalls he was always dissatisfied with the "straightforward journalism" he sent via cable to his editors in Poland while he was a foreign correspondent for the Polish Press Agency. Once the cabled news story was sent, "I was always left with a feeling of inadequacy. I had only covered the political event, and not really conveyed the deeper, and I felt, truer nature of what was going on. . . .The second version is what I write later, and that expresses what I actually felt, what I lived through, the reflections surrounding the simple news story" (Buford, 1987, 94). Through the telling of stories and the writing of literature, writers and readers join in the constitution of reality and meaning (Kvale, in Anderson, 1995, 21). Code (1987) explains: "It is understanding [one of the modes of knowing], in particular, that has a vital source in good literature" (201). Literature, of course, also communicates factual knowledge.

"Most of all, though, we come to understand something about the characters of people. It is this kind of understanding of people, experiences, and ways of life and values that literature can best afford" (201-201). What Code calls "knowledge by acquaintance" is what one learns from immediate experience. "Knowledge by description," to Code, is that which one learns from written or spoken testimony. Knowledge from literature, then, stands between these two. It includes descriptive knowledge, but also, since literature shows rather than tells, it provides vicarious experience, "taking one into it so that one experiences it almost directly" (Code, 1987, 206-207).

Using personal voice to establish credibility is a device of the literary artist as well of the journalist. It builds upon the journalistic tradition that rates evidence from "primary sources" superior to that gathered second-hand (Ullmann and Colbert, 1991). By going even further and establishing his persona within the text, Kapuscinski and other literary journalists assure readers that what is written is what truly happened. "Eye-witness evidence . . . makes for authenticity" (Carey, 1987, xxix). Kapuscinski builds credibility by showing readers his reporting process, the difficulties he has gone through to obtain information, and his willingness to defy authorities in order to get first-hand information. In his report of the Nigerian uprising, Kapuscinski describes being doused by benzene at a roadblock set up by rebels ("because here they burn people in benzene: it guarantees complete incineration"), and being beaten and threatened with murder by armed men (*The Soccer War*, 133-135). In the Congo, he on several occasions escaped execution through his daring and his wit, through use of bribes, through courage, but mostly through luck (*The Soccer War*, 61-84). "There is a cumulative aspect to literary trustworthiness," Code explains. "To trust a writer is to do neither more nor less than one does throughout one's life in acquiring knowledge from other people" (214). As his tales of life-threatening experience accumulate, each one further authenticating his experience, one is more prone to believe what Kapuscinski writes.

As a matter of style, Kapuscinski subtly establishes himself as the arbiter of truth. He testifies to what he sees and experiences, usually writing in the present tense to accentuate the immediacy of events. He ridicules the conventional wisdom of newspapers and television. He shows readers the process he went through to get information. He devalues official sources of information, often presenting them as nameless people: "someone told me in conversation" (The Soccer War, 101); Savak, the Iranian secret police "controlled, *someone calculated*, three million informants" (*Shah of Shahs*, 46, emphasis added).[6] In response to an interviewer's question, Kapuscinski acknowledged that critics often complain of his lack of verifiable details: "Kapuscinski never mentions dates, Kapuscinski never gives us the name of the minister, he has forgotten the order of events," he mocked his critics. "All that, of course, is exactly what I avoid. If those are the questions you want answered, you can visit your local library" where newspapers and reference books can be consulted (Buford, 1987, 95). Without the verifiable data, of course, Kapuscinski positions himself, his credibility, as the sole evidence that what he writes is true.

Verifiable Truth and Literary Journalism

Scholars who have defended literary journalism as a genre of *literature* have usually avoided making a distinction between fact and fiction, basing judgments instead on narrative cohesion, verisimilitude, and other literary criteria. Hellmann, for example, positions literary journalism within the world of fiction, accepting Frye's definition of fiction as "literary prose," although he argues that lack of factual verifiability invalidates a work of literary journalism (1981, 21, 18). Heyne distinguishes between accuracy and meaning as two different kinds of truth and argues that "inaccuracy is not necessarily fatal to a nonfiction text" (1987, 486-488). Zavarzadeh (1976), exhibiting a postmodern aversion to categorization as well as a rejection of the correspondence theory of truth, argues that all journalism is fiction. Scholars who have attempted to legitimize literary journalism as a genre of *journalism*, on the other hand, have hinged their classification scheme on the criterion of verifiability.

Connery situates literary journalism within the tradition of journalism, defining the practice as "nonfiction printed prose whose *verifiable* content is shaped and transformed into a story or sketch by use of narrative and rhetorical techniques generally associated with fiction" (1992, xiv, emphasis added). He argues that a fundamental quality of literary journalism is that it is based on "actuality," or real people, places, and events; "verifiable detail is essential" (Connery, 1992, 6). Sims lists accuracy as one of the defining characteristics of literary journalism (1984, 15-16; Sims and Kramer, 1995). Kramer, a practicing literary journalist and educator, argues there is a contract between the literary journalist and readers that "the writers do what they appear to do, which is to get reality as straight as they can manage, *and not make it up*" (Sims and Kramer, 1995, 23, emphasis added). Wilkins also demands verifiability by defining literary journalism as a story "which connects the objective facts of the event with the cultural facts of symbols and myth" (1989, 181).

Kramer has attempted to codify standards for literary journalists based on the criterion of accuracy. He lists the standards as a series of "thou shalt nots": the literary journalist must use "no composite scenes, no misstated chronology, no falsification of the discernible drift or proportion of events, no invention of quotes, no attribution of thoughts to sources unless the sources have said they'd had those thoughts" (Sims and Kramer, 1995, 25). Characters, also, should not be wholly invented by the author nor composed from two or more real people (Sims, 1984, 15).

Insisting on verifiability for accepting literary journalism into the domain of journalism, however, is problematic for a number of reasons. First, it ignores the mounting evidence from science and philosophy that denies the existence of a verifiable reality that can be described through logical-positivist empiricism and affirms that reality is socially and culturally constructed (Kvale, in Anderson, 1995, 19; Rorty, in Anderson, 1995, 100-106; Berger and Luckman, 1967; Anderson, in Anderson, 1995, 110-116). Second, it fails to take into account the voluminous evidence that all journalism constructs a truth that is based on culturally accepted conventions, which in the case of non-literary journalism often contributes to the reification of those in authority and maintenance of the status quo (Gans, 1980, esp. 182-213; Tuchman, 1978; Ettema, 1987, 82-83; Herman and Chomsky, 1988; Altschull, 1984; Schudson, 1982; Bennett and Edelman, 1985). Third, it cannot accommodate the dominant narrative theory, which holds that any imposition of narrative is a moral act that results to some extent in a fictionalization (White, 1978, 121-134; Mitchell, 1981; Eason, 1984; Pauly, in Sims, 1990, 122). When narrative theory is applied, the criteria for distinguishing between verifiable literary journalism and fictional literary journalism break down. And fourth, using verification as a standard for literary journalism draws too narrowly the boundaries, leaving outside of the circle many writers who deal with real events, writers such as Kapuscinski.

Kapuscinski violates many of the accuracy standards codified by Kramer. The sources quoted as length in *Emperor*, for example, are often composite characters (Schiff, 1991, 179). This is a technique he shares with other literary journalists, including Joseph Mitchell, who composed the main character in *Old Mr. Flood* and may have fictionalized Joe Gould in *Joe Gould's Secret* (Sims, in Sims, 1990, 93-98). In 1972, Gail Sheehy created a composite character for her report on prostitution.[7]

Another example of Kapuscinski's apparent use of fictionalization occurs when he creates scenes and dialogue to describe the arrest of the assassin of Shah Nasr-ed-Din, who was killed in 1896: "From time to time they come across a few clay huts where haggard peasants surround the dusty travelers. 'Who is that you're leading, sir?' they shyly ask the soldier. 'Who?' the soldier repeats the question and holds his tongue for a moment to heighten the suspense. 'This,' he says finally, pointing to the prisoner, 'is the Shah's murderer.'" (*Shah*, 18). Given that the event being described occurred in the 19th century, it is doubtful Kapuscinski could be relating verifiable facts in this scene. However, given the context and Kapuscinski's purposely concocted "aura of artifice," his deception is "transparent" (Schiff, 1991, 229). Such transparency was not present, though, in *In Cold Blood* when Truman Capote fictionalized a key scene and dialogue that cut to the heart of the book's depiction of one of the killers' motivation, this from a writer who insisted that his goal was to be "immaculately factual" (Heyne, 1987, 485; and Plimpton, 1966). Likewise, George Orwell frequently made up scenes and facts in *Road to Wigan Pier* and other of his nonfiction works (Kenner, in Sims, 1990, 188). More recently, a book labeled "nonfiction" by its publisher, *Sleepers*, by Lorenzo Carcaterra, contains detailed description of scenes the writer could not have had access to or access to information about (1995). Likewise, in *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil: A Savannah Story*, author John Berendt alters chronology and takes other liberties with the verifiable facts (see Author's Note, Berendt, 1994).

When quotations are warranted, Kapuscinski doesn't even attempt to achieve accuracy. "I don't make interviews," he told an interviewer. "And I don't really take very many notes. . . . I don't write down conversations" (Schiff, 1991, 228). Describing the mind-set of Emperor Haile Selassie, Kapuscinski frequently attributes thoughts and emotions to his subject though he had not interviewed him. In one passage, he writes, "The Emperor, however, listened to neither the aristocratic grumbling nor the university whispers, believing as he did that all extremes are harmful and unnatural" (*The Emperor*, 85). In this, Kapuscinski adopts a strategy defended recently by literary journalist Joe McGinniss, who argued in an author's note to *The Last Brother: The Rise and Fall of Teddy Kennedy* that a writer who is immersed in the life of his subject should not hesitate to present events from his subject's point of view (McGinniss, 1993, 622).

Furthermore, taking an omniscient narrator's stance, Kapuscinski frequently offers analyses without attribution, often constructing elaborate metaphors. "The rejection of a transplant – once it begins, the process is irreversible," Kapuscinski writes in *Shah of Shahs*. "All it takes is for society to accept the conviction that the imposed form of existence does more harm than good. . . . There will be no peace until the imposed, alien body is purged" (138). In *The Soccer War*, he writes, "Silence has its laws and its demands. Silence demands that concentration camps be built in uninhabited areas. Silence demands an enormous police apparatus with an army of informers. Silence demands that its enemies disappear suddenly and without a trace" (190).

Journalism in a Postmodern World

Kapuscinski's blend of fact and fiction, then, is not without precedent nor companions in current writing.[8] Yet, to deny the journalistic legitimacy of his work would be to accept logical-positivist premises that are untenable in a postmodern world, or else would be an assertion of social power that in itself could not be defended. As Pauly has asserted:

> The truth of journalism does not reside in its representationalist narratives, as journalists and literary critics both assume. Writers use conventional codes to convey truth, but such codes are themselves just one form of a larger series of social occasions during which interpreter and interpreted meet to argue their positions. . . For them [most editors, reporters, and publishers] writing must remain a full-time, cosmopolitan profession, conducted on citizens' behalf by commercially profitable publications that bureaucratically organize the symbolic practices through which a community represents itself (in Sims, 1990, 123-125).

For Pauly, the New Journalism narratives of the Sixties were "styles of social action" that "compelled us to reconsider the social rituals through which writers might declare themselves responsible rather than merely free" (in Sims, 1990, 124 and 123). The radical approaches to the depiction of reality found in the works of such writers as Hunter Thompson, Michael Herr, and Ryszard Kapuscinski self-consciously challenge status quo conventions of defining truth that cannot logically be denied legitimacy without denying the political stance of their messages.[9]

Any attempt to impose the standard of actuality and other standards as outlined by Sims and Kramer (1995) would deny writers such as Kapuscinski their right to challenge a monolithic depiction of reality. As Bruner has noted, what makes the innovative storyteller such a powerful figure in a culture is that "he may go beyond the conventional scripts, leading people to see human happenings in a fresh way, indeed, in a way they had never before 'noticed' or even dreamed" (1991, 12). But to legitimize Kapuscinski's style would not have to be without standards. Solutions grounded in narrative theory and epistemic ethics offer an alternative strategy to the actuality-based criterion.

Narrative theory offers the criteria of verisimilitude, probability (Does the story cohere free of contradictions?), and fidelity (Is the story logical, of sound reasoning, and true to its own values?) (Bruner, 1991, 13; Fischer, 1985, 349-350; Heyne, 1987, 489). Truth is evaluated by judging whether one's narrative makes sense when compared to other known narratives and to nonnarrative knowledge (MacIntyre, 1984, 194-203). As Bruner argues, "narrative 'truth' is judged by its verisimilitude rather than its verifiability" (1991, 13). Under these criteria, Kapuscinski's work, which does not promise comprehensive verifiable details, but instead offers an intensely personal, sometimes fablist vision, holds together.[10]

That is not to say that Kapuscinski or any other writer cannot be held accountable for what he writes. As Kvale instructs, "with the loss of general systems of legitimation, when actions are not justified by appeal to some higher system or idea of progress, the values and the ethical responsibility of the interacting persons becomes central" (in Anderson, 1995, 22). And MacIntyre agrees. Individuals are accountable, MacIntyre asserts, and "it is always appropriate to ask the agent for an intelligible account" (1984, 195). In this respect, Kapuscinski testifies to his reporting process, provides clear and certain clues to his ground rules, discusses his actions, reactions, and emotions. His techniques and biases are laid bare before the readers, allowing each to judge his credibility. Kapuscinski, speaking within the text to an editor who challenged his credibility, delineates the boundaries of his contract to his readers: " 'Go there yourself,' I answered in a tired voice, because I still felt Stanleyville and Usumbura [cities in the Congo] in my bones. 'Go ahead and see for yourself. And I hope you make it back alive.'" The writer, in this view, is situated as an independent moral agent, responsible for what he writes and readers, as independent moral agents, must independently decide whether to believe him.

Code, an epistemologist, clarifies this position:

> Where actual, historical events or characters play central roles in a work, one expects that the research has been done accurately; but there is no outright obligation upon writers, given the long tradition of poetic license, to tell things as they were rather than as they might have been. The onus is thus upon the readers to be sure that any claims they make are responsible (1987, 214).

Writers, to achieve credibility, must provide "good, independent reasons" to support their truth claims (Code, 1987, 214). Beyond reasons, the writer must provide coherence and verisimilitude. "Being true *to* life differs from truth *of* fact; it is both a looser and a more demanding relation" (Code, 1987, 211, emphasis in original).

The analytical power of this strategy is seen when one applies its criteria of coherence, verisimilitude, fidelity, and good reasons to two different stylists, Kapuscinski and McGinniss. In *Shah of Shahs*, Kapuscinski writes in the first person, accentuates the reporter/writer construction of reality, frequently reminds the reader that he is not in possession of all the facts (hence, that his version is flawed), and warns the reader that traditional cultural conventions for determining truth no longer work to explain the world's events. "I could go on at length about what I've seen and lived through here," Kapuscinski writes early in the opening chapter of *Shah*, "but it is difficult to organize my impressions. . . ." (4, ellipses in original). The reader is informed, in other words, that the tale will be Kapuscinki's tale, but it will be flawed, incomplete story. "I see I'm missing or have misplaced a few pictures," Kapuscinski admits (26). There are facts he does not have. "The picture was clipped from a newspaper so carelessly the caption is missing" (134). The newspaper, representing the traditional conventions of bringing meanings to events, once divorced from the events, are of little use. The reader (here, Kapuscinski) must supply his own meaning to the events depicted in the photograph. When the traditional conventions are no longer useful, then it is not unexpected that Kapuscinski would use his imagination, his intuition, and other epistemological means at his disposal. The imaginary scene and dialogue Kapuscinski constructs in which the assassin of an former shah is led to his execution, then, coheres and retains fidelity to the rules Kapuscinski has laid out. While the scene lacks verifiability, it has verisimilitude. Kapuscinski's MacIntyrean accounting to his readers is his personal, eyewitness testimony. His best evidence is his willingness to risk his life to get this story and his determination, as evidenced in his interviews (see Buford, 1987), to use literary style to communicate the deeper meanings he perceives in the events. As he told his doubting editor, if you don't believe him, go there yourself and he hopes you get back alive.

In contrast, McGinniss's *The Last Brother* is not a first-person account. It is written in the third person, with an omniscient narrator, and establishes itself as a true-to-life telling of events and motivations in Teddy Kennedy's life. McGinniss uses literary techniques such as dialogue and scene-by-scene construction. However, he also appeals to authoritative, named sources as evidence (David Burke, Kennedy's chief aide, is quoted at various times throughout the book), and he records minute details that give the impression of eyewitness accuracy ("The plane at left Washington at 8:35. Normally,m in the twin-engined, six-seat Aero Commander, the flight would take an hour and twenty minutes" [373]). Because of this, a reader will be correct to expect that what is in the book has been witnessed by or told to the author. Under these rules, the attribution of thoughts to Teddy Kennedy and the telling of events through Teddy Kennedy's eyes without McGinniss ever interviewing Teddy Kennedy lacks fidelity, and the imagined scenes do not cohere with the rest of the narrative. When McGinniss is called to account for his stylist liberties, his response in the author's note is that he has spent so much time researching Teddy Kennedy's life, that he had "immersed" himself in the politician's life, he has the stylistic right to leap inside Teddy Kennedy's head. And besides, McGinniss argues, other biographers have done the same thing, so it is appropriate for him to do it, too. It is each reader's option to whether to believe McGinniss, to accept his reasons as "good reasons." It would not be unreasonable, following Code's epistemic responsibility guidelines, for a reader to find McGinniss's work flawed, particularly when McGinniss's ethical lapses from past writing assignments are considered as part of his MacIntyrean accounting (see Malcolm, 1989).

Using narrative theory and epistemic responsibility theory as a strategy for assessing the works of Kapuscinski and McGinniss allows both books to be labeled "literary journalism," and yet also allows each writer to be held to high standards. It is a strategy that has explanatory, descriptive, and evaluative power.

Ettema has suggested a strategy that approaches the one offered here. Ettema's strategy is "a strategy at once ancient and contemporary, for trying to do better [at journalism] despite epistemological uncertainty would be to frame the journalistic quest for truth as an exercise in Aristotelian *phronesis* or 'practical wisdom'" (1987, 85). Adding the audience's ethical role enriches such a strategy, allowing it to take in the dynamics of the writer-reader interaction. What results is a strategy that lacks the moral certainty of more conventional, but less logical, notions of truth and falsehood, but it adds the ethical good of promoting freedom, for writers and readers, and it meshes with the themes of the postmodern world.

Notes

[1] Kapuscinski is the author of more than 14 books, four of which have been translated into English and released in the United States. This studies focuses on the Vintage International editions of *The Emperor: Downfall of an Autocrat*, translated from the Polish by William R. Brand and Katarzyna Mroczkowska-Brand (1989); *Shah of Shahs* (1992), also translated from the Polish by Brand and Mroczkowska-Brand; and *The Soccer War*, translated from the Polish by Brand (1992). *The Emperor* was originally published in Polish as *Cesarz* by Czytelnick, Warsaw, 1978. The first publication of the English translation was in 1983 by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. *Shah of Shahs* was originally published in Polish as *Szachinszach*. The English translation was originally published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich in 1985. *The Soccer War* was originally published in Polish as *Wojna futbolowa*. Its English translation was originally published by Granta Books, London, in 1990.

[2] "Revolution," *The New Yorker* 61 (March 4, 1985) 79-96, and 61 (March 11, 1985) 86; "A Warsaw Diary," *Harper's* 271(July 1985) 13-15; "1945," The New Republic 194 (January 27, 1986) 39-42; "Fire on the Road," *The New York Review of Books* 33 (June 12, 1986) 13-15; "The Soccer War," *Harper's* 272 (June 1986) 47-55; "A Great Cold, A Great Thaw," *Harper's* 288 (April 1994) 34; "Rules of the Border," *Esquire* 121 (April 1994) 135-137; "The Temple and the Palace," *The New Yorker* 70 (May 23, 1994) 72-76; "Back to the Future," *The New York Review of Books* 41 (November 17, 1994) 41-47; "One World, Two Civilizations," *New Perspectives Quarterly* 5 (Fall 1988) 38-41; "Uganda: After the Terror," *New York Times Magazine* (March 12, 1989) 38-41; "The Hunt for Images of War," *Columbia Journalism Review* 30 (May/June 1991) 62-63; "In a Baroque Land," *Harper's* 282 (March 1991) 34-35; "The Writer as Combatant," *New Perspectives Quarterly* 6 (Spring 1989) 54-55; "Outline for a Book That Could Have Been Written," *Granta* 21 (Spring 1987) 99-114; "Stiff," *Granta* 21 (Spring 1987) 115-123; "Christmas Eve in Uganda," *Granta* 26 (Spring 1989) 9-17; "The Snow in Ghana," *Granta* 28 (Autumn 1989) 47-53.

[3] See, for example, "Kapuscinski's Adventures: A peripatetic Pole stalks the Third World," Peter Prescott, *Newsweek* 117 (April 15, 1991) 73.

[4] Some exceptions are "The Borderlands of Culture: Writing by W.E.B. Du Bois, James Agee, Tillie Olsen, and Gloria Anzaldua," by Shelley Fisher Fishkin; and "The Politics of the Plain Style," by Hugh Kenner, which concerns George Orwell; both are *in Literary Journalism in the Twentieth Century*, Norman Sims, ed. (New York: Oxford Press, 1990). See also, *Textured Lives: Women, Art, and Representation in Modern Mexico*, Claudia Schaefer (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992).

[5] In a later essay, Eason distinguishes between "realist" and "modernist" literary journalists ("The New Journalism and the Image-World," in Sims, Literary Journalism, 191-205). The realists, including Tom Wolfe and Truman Capote, believe in a discoverable real world, whereas the modernists, including Joan Didion and Hunter S. Thompson, do not.

However, it is my contention that the use of narrative style in itself creates an individualized and personal depiction of reality that is influenced by the writer's social and cultural milieu (see Hayden White, "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality," in *On Narrative*, W.J.T. Mitchell, ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

[6] American writer Edmund Wilson, who always insisted his occupation was "journalist," often used this technique as well. See, for example, "Back East: October Again: A Strike in Lawrence, Mass.," in Edmund Wilson, *The American Earthquake: A Documentary of the Twenties and Thirties* (New York: Anchor Books, 1964), 421-431.

[7] "The Hooker's Boswell," *Newsweek* 80 (December 4, 1972) 61.

[8] *Granta*, a journal published in London, publishes many works of literary journalism alongside works of fiction and rarely distinguishes between them so that it is often difficult to tell which is nonfiction and which is fiction. See, for example, *Birthday Special: Granta* 28 (Autumn 1989).

[9] The works of Thompson and Herr are discussed in John Hellmann, *Fables of Fact: The New Journalism as New Fiction* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981).

[10] For a discussion of the fablist style in fiction and in the works of some literary journalists, see Hellmann, *Fables of Fact*.

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FRAMES OF BLAME: A TEXTUAL SEMIOSIS OF *NEWSTRACK'S* REPRESENTATION OF AIDS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The propensity to 'blame others' pervades media AIDS discourses. Once the Indian media joined the AIDS bandwagon, it subscribed to similar phenomena of sensationalism and blame attribution.

This paper semiotically analyzes the culturally specific rhetoric of a landmark feature on AIDS in India produced by *Newstrack* in May 1992. Although *Newstrack* is India's leading video newsmagazine, and is known for its iconoclastic journalistic approach, the textual semiosis elucidates how even oppositional discourse tends to use the crutch of blame attribution to validate its claims.

FRAMES OF BLAME: A TEXTUAL SEMIOSIS OF *NEWSTRACK'S* REPRESENTATION OF AIDS IN INDIA

Introduction

Over the ages, dominant social structures of societies have persistently shaped discourses on disease in negative strokes as a means for catharsis in order to purge the self of the fear of becoming 'diseased,' and remove the self from the deviant domain of the scourged (Gilman, 1988). Molded by power-related dynamics of class, gender, race and culture, definitions of disease almost always carry negative connotations -- connotations of abnormalcy and deviance. For instance, according to Fabrega (1974):

> " . . . disease is a temporally extended undesirable deviation of a human characteristic or set characteristics. The fact that the deviation is undesirable usually means that it gives rise to a need for corrective action. Diseases are also unplanned, unwanted, and usually dysfunctional occurrences in human groups" (p. 125).

All qualifiers in the above description of disease carry negative significations. Moralistic overtones in disease discourses tend to posit a clear demarcation between the 'healthy us,' and the 'diseased other' (Gilman, 1988). Such textual tactics enable the former to exercise control over the 'reality' of the latter, and deny their own vulnerability to disease.

Condemned by its very own definition, discourses on diseases which are sexually transmitted tend to have a greater propensity toward stigmatization of the disease and the diseased. For instance, several medieval Western moral, cultural and religious discourses heavily condemned too much indulgence in sexual pleasures as a sign of deviance

— hence, disease resulting from such deviance was surely to be abhorred. The dominant representation of syphilis in the fifteenth century as the scourge of the morally and sexually depraved is a cogent reminder of the power of the moral and social structures of society, which perceive themselves as removed from the 'diseased other,' in shaping discourse on sexually transmitted diseases. The latter twentieth century discourses on AIDS, when critically and culturally examined, indicate that the stigmatization of the sexually deviant 'diseased other' still persists (Gilman, 1988).

In this century, and specifically in the context of AIDS discourse, the media has emerged as a dominant 'voice' in the representation of the disease in different cultures. Blaming the 'other' has been the mainstay of most media AIDS discourses (Sabatier, 1988), and it is not difficult to detect oppositional textual connotations within these discourses which generate polarized meanings of good and evil, moral and immoral, pure and impure, deviant and straight, and so on and so forth.

For instance, in the early part of the 1980s, when there was widespread ambiguity and panic about the nature of this 'new' disease without a cure, the U.S. media was quick to label AIDS as a disease resulting from the "4-Hs -- homosexuality, heroin addiction, hemophiliacs and Haitians" (Gilman, 1988, p.245). This is a perfect example of the propensity to blame the 'other.' However, the U.S. media was not the lone perpetrator in the AIDS blame game. The former Soviet Union blamed the U.S. for manufacturing HIV in laboratories as a biological weapon, while France came up with similar conspiracy theories. Asian nations such as Thailand and India blamed 'foreign' tourists for bringing the virus into their countries, and African nations got more than their fair share of blame when several media portrayals focused on ethnic rituals involving sacrificial animal blood as being the channel which transferred the virus from animals to humans (Shannon, Pyle and Bashshur, 1991). While the media in various countries and cultures had a field day with such mudslinging, the disease continued to spread, and the 'other' continued to remain the 'other' -- peripheral to mainstream media discourses.

Although significant breakthroughs in AIDS cure research have demystified the disease to a great extent over the last decade and a half, the propensity to blame still remains embedded in media discourses on AIDS and HIV -- even in those discourses which ostensibly generate sympathy toward the 'victims' of the disease. Each culture shapes its discourse within the context of accepted and unaccepted norms of sexuality, and injects the issues with all the social, cultural, political, economic and religious constructions which are inseparable from the connotations the phenomenon of AIDS carries with it within that culture.

Keeping this cultural component in mind, this paper focuses on a semiotic and textual analysis of blame attribution in the AIDS situation in India, a country which has been doomed by media all around the world as sitting on an AIDS time-bomb waiting to explode, through the ideological lens of *Newstrack* -- India's first and foremost video newsmagazine which prides itself on its iconoclastic journalistic approach toward political and socio-economic issues (Nihal Singh, 1992).

AIDS in India —— a brief contextual setting for the analysis

Strict codes of sexual propriety in current Indian society (curiously a direct antithesis of the culture's rich heritage in erotic art and literature as exemplified in the Khajuraho temple sculptures and the text of the

Kamasutra) kept the issue of AIDS outside the domains of public discourse until just a few years ago. Despite the media uproar about the disease in Western societies, the Indian government and people did not identify with the disease until pressure from Western discourse in the late 1980s resulted in a sharp increase in discourse about AIDS within the nation (Salvi, 1995).

Almost overnight, statistical sources started reporting staggering numbers, and there was widespread panic about the AIDS crisis facing the Indian population. "By 2000, experts predict, 1 million people will have AIDS in India, and 5 million will be HIV positive," a recent article in the *Columbus Dispatch* quoted from the *Washington Post.* "And if trends hold, India could have as many as 30 million people with HIV by 2010 — about twice today's worldwide total" (*Dispatch*, August 20, 1995, p.7A). The press had found a new source for sensation in connection to the AIDS issue. (Note: This article, however, failed to provide a contextual picture of the AIDS numbers in India -- the 30 million is out of a total population of 930 million. With due respect for human life, the percentage would not be as alarming when compared with the AIDS figures of nations with smaller populations.)

The print press in India, which enjoyed more freedom than the broadcast media at the time, was not slow to latch onto the bandwagon of AIDS hysteria — a process which had already been set in motion by the Western press. Targets for blame and 'victims' and 'victimizers' were sought — both by the media and the government. While the government asserted that sexual relations with foreigners was the reason behind the infiltration of the disease into India (Bonacci, 1992), the print media repeatedly attacked the government and the medical community for hiding its head in the sand, and not facing up to the pertinent issues connected with the rapid spread of AIDS within the country. The print media, on the other hand, were criticized for their sensational stance on the topic, and for causing panic with their fear-based reporting (Gilada and Mundul, 1993). While the social structures which control AIDS discourse in India are busy targeting parties to blame, those most susceptible to the disease — the poverty-stricken masses who are not even aware what AIDS is or how it is transmitted — are the majority who remain silent about the issue, wondering what the commotion is all about.

Newstrack's report on AIDS in India -- one of the early broadcast ventures into the issue

To put the *Newstrack* philosophy of reporting within perspective, it is important to clarify at this point that before the satellite and cable television boom in India in the early 1990s, the broadcast media were government owned and controlled. The private venture by *Newstrack* to serve as an alternative voice within the Indian world of broadcast journalism was one of the first attempts of its kind. Although initially hampered by governmental attempts at censorship and control, *Newstrack* has mostly been successful at holding its own, and investigatively reporting on issues which aim to expose the activities and policies of the dominant voices in public discourse (Nihal Singh, 1992).

In its May 1992 edition, *Newstrack* produced a special feature story on the AIDS situation in India. This was an attempt to expose the 'victimization' of AIDS patients in India, and the apathy of the government and other dominant social structures toward the gravity of the epidemic — a 'typical' *Newstrack* story characterized by oppositional discourse.

However, despite this syntagmatically altruistic aim of the feature to side with AIDS 'victims,' this paper analyzes how even *Newstrack* had to resort to blame attribution throughout the feature in its attempt to validate its claims. Ironically, the blame was not restricted to the 'victimizers' alone, but was also cast upon the 'victims' — at paradigmatic levels. Through metonymic, metaphoric and connotational analyses of the textual signifiers which generate the overall signification (Berger, 1995) of blame attribution, this study indicates that the propensity to blame is predominant even in alternative discourses on AIDS.

Before turning to the actual text of the feature story, a word about media frames. According to Gitlin (1980), a pioneer in the field of research on media frames, "Media frames are persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual. Frames allow journalists to process large amounts of information quickly and routinely: to recognize it as information; to assign it cognitive categories; and to package it for efficient relay to their audience" (p. 7). Since the text examined in this study was a film piece, it was important to analyze it in terms of the interplay between the oral and visual constructs of the narrative, and the resultant meanings generated. The combination of the oral and the visual was what constituted a frame.

Although the main inquiry of this paper was aimed at semiotically analyzing the different layers of blame attribution inherent in the narrative of the *Newstrack* feature, related issues such as the use of sensational metaphors, the impact of Western ideology on the AIDS discourse in India, the overtly authoritative voice of the narrator, and connotations regarding homosexuality, class and gender issues were also examined in an attempt to present as contextual a representation as possible of the culturally specific inquiry at hand.

Frames of Blame

The frame of blame and the medical community

The frame which blames the doctors' ignorance about AIDS facts and their deception of AIDS patients pervades the entire narrative. The text paints a vivid picture of how doctors in reputable hospitals in the cities avoid being open with their patients about the disease and often refuse to treat them.

In three instances, our attention is drawn to three emaciated AIDS patients who express their complete faith in the doctors' ability to cure them. This faith is immediately belied when in the very next shots, their doctors state in a matter of fact manner how these patients are at death's door and it is "only a matter of time" till they "succumb" to death. These juxtapositions generate blame by contrasting the blind faith of the patients with their deception by the doctors.

In another frame, an equally unaware HIV positive prostitute states that she will get married if her mother insists upon it. She is obviously unaware of the nature in which HIV can be transmitted. In the next instance, we see her doctor confessing how she had been told not to get married but nobody had bothered to explain to her the reasons for not getting married. As the camera closes in on the doctors face who looks away uncomfortably, the reporter elicits a confession from him that the patient should have been made aware of the "harsh" facts and that "a terrible mistake" had been made. Blame is generated as the doctor reluctantly admits, "Yes, she should be told." He is guilty of not telling his patient the entire truth. He is guilty for the spread of the virus.

The close-up of a slogan banner which reads "DANGER — Ignorant Doctors on the Loose," immediately follows this sequence, and emphasizes the negligence of the doctors towards their patients. The reporter's authoritative voice-over proclaims how there are several doctors like the one just interviewed, who do not warn their patients about the "death trap" they are in, and emphasizes that it is the "callous" attitude of these doctors that is leading to the unchecked spread of HIV in India.

Another vivid condemnation follows when the narrative illustrates how the doctors are ignorant about the basic facts about the disease, and how they are not aware of the gravity of the AIDS situation. A doctor is shown flipping idly through the pages of a journal, and the camera then focuses on a group of young medical students sitting around idly. The reporter bombards them with questions about how AIDS is transmitted, and all these to-be doctors can say is "I don't know." Another signification of blame is passed in this frame. The students are ignorant and only capable of "making wild guesses" at the answers they should have. In keeping with the tone of the text, these students are portrayed as nervous and unsure. The connotation is that these medical students, who will comprise the medical work force of the future, are ignorant of the facts they need to know in order to check the AIDS epidemic. Another implication is that of the abuse of power and faith vested in them by the general population. They are the ones who are in the position to medically address the 'deviance,' and they themselves seem to be blind to the urgency of the situation.

The medical community is not only blamed for deceiving patients and not being aware of the facts, they are also blamed for using contaminated blood for the purpose of blood transfusions. A banner with a syringe in place of the "I" in "AIDS" reads, "AIDS: Beware of Ignorant Doctors." As the camera pans unsuspecting patients waiting for blood transfusions, the voice-over passes a sentence of doom on them by proclaiming that "90% of the blood supply is unsafe in India." These patients, mostly children, are labelled as the "victims" of the careless medical staff. In other words, the doctors are not only unable to check the spread of HIV, they are actually aiding in spreading the virus -- by using contaminated blood for transfusions. In this frame, the medical community is emphatically cast in the role of the villain.

Refusal on the part of the doctors to treat AIDS patients lays a further dose of blame upon the medical community. While the camera focuses on sensational newspaper article headlines which read, "Doctors in grip of fear psychosis," and "AIIMS docs ditch AIDS woman," the voice-over describes how doctors turn "victims" of AIDS away with the excuse that they lack "sufficient guidelines" to treat them. The voice over blames the doctors for causing "wide spread panic" among the public by refusing to treat AIDS patients.

Thus, the meaning generated against the medical community through textual signification is one of blame for exacerbating the AIDS situation in India. Being in a position to help, they are signified as incompetent, deceiving, callous, ignorant and promoting the stigma associated with AIDS. They lie to their patients, treat them with contaminated blood and openly refuse to perform surgery on AIDS patients. When questioned, they are uncomfortable and unsure and tend to look away from the camera. The semiosis of blame is clear in this frame of the feature. The medical community plays the villain's role, and *Newstrack* passes judgment on it.

Implicating prostitutes and prostitution

Although the text labels prostitutes as the "helpless victims" of the AIDS epidemic in India, metonymic strains in the narrative actually lay the blame for the spread of the virus on the very trade of prostitution. A large portion of the Indian media's discourse on AIDS so far has focused on how prostitution is the main channel for the spread of HIV within the country. The narrative emphasizes this assertion.

All prostitutes interviewed during the course of the narrative are labelled as "Rescued Prostitute - HIV positive." In the first case, we see the rescued prostitute working in a local cafeteria being treated without stigma. However, the narrative emphasizes that despite all semblances of normalcy and health, this prostitute is completely unaware that she can transmit the virus she carries through sexual intercourse, blood donation, intravenous drug use and to her child through prenatal transmission. The connotation is that being unaware of the facts, she is a potential source for the spread of the HIV.

Next, a close-up of a helpless looking prostitute is coupled with the voice-over which states that these women are helpless because they are ignorant. In other words, their ignorance is not just their nemesis, but that of many others onto whom they may pass the virus. In another interview with a prostitute, the reporter asks her if she insists that her customers use condoms, or if she is aware of AIDS. The answer to both the questions is negative, the prostitute is hesitant to come forth with the answers and looks away from the camera as though she is ashamed or guilty of a crime. In the next scene, an AIDS expert states how these prostitutes are so poor that they do not abstain from business even while they are menstruating. And this, according to the expert, is like an "intravenous injection" of the virus to their customers. Thus, at a paradigmatic level, prostitutes are to blame for infecting their customers.

Next, the camera pans the brothels of Bombay where prostitutes are shown soliciting customers. The voice-over reports ominous statistics of the large number of prostitutes in Bombay who are HIV positive, and the number of men they serve daily — another frame of the prostitute being the source of pollution and disease. The text emphasizes that even if a prostitute discovers she is HIV positive, she "prefers" to hide the fact in fear of losing her business or getting killed. On screen, a prostitute is shown hiding her face as she plays with a child.

The camera moves to a child prostitute with her face covered by a veil. When asked about condom use, she confesses that she does not always use condoms but gets regular check ups for sexually transmitted diseases. When asked if she knows that there is no cure for AIDS, she answers in the negative. Once again, the prostitute is shown to be the ignorant source of the virus who may deliberately hide the fact that she is infected. Hence, she is guilty of knowingly passing on the virus although she may be unaware of the consequences of doing so.

Another frame explains how the majority of urban boys in Bombay between the ages of 14 and 18 have their first sexual encounter with prostitutes — the connotation being that they contract the virus from these prostitutes. The reporter talks to an 18-year-old HIV positive boy who, when asked how he contracted the virus immediately answers that he'd been to the brothel. Once again, the signification of blame is clear. Going to a prostitute is equated with contracting HIV since she is the source of pollution.

Even the promiscuous behavior of a military personnel is blamed on a prostitute. A close-up of the man shows him looking down remorsefully, and the voice over reports that he has received the "death warrant" and passed it onto his wife. The source of the virus — a prostitute he had visited while he was away from home on duty. Thus, she is to blame for not only infecting him, but also for his promiscuity and for indirectly infecting his "innocent" wife.

The only part of the narrative which clearly defends prostitutes is a comment by a social worker who states that because of inescapable economic conditions, prostitutes are forced to engage in sex without using condoms if their customers insist upon it. Hence, it is useless to hold them responsible for spreading the virus among their clients. This statement, however, was made in response to the reporter's question which implied that prostitutes *are* responsible for knowingly spreading the virus.

Ironically, although the text overtly sympathizes with prostitutes and calls them 'victims' of the AIDS epidemic, the metonymic connotations signify otherwise. Their trade is blamed, although not directly, and they are repeatedly labelled as ignorant and contributing toward the rapid spread of HIV. At the end of the narrative, the reporter runs off a list of corrective actions which need to be taken to check the spread of AIDS in India. However, he fails to mention what steps should be taken to remove the unawareness among prostitutes, and help them understand the dangers of their trade. The blame is laid on them, but helping or educating them does not seem to be important on the list of concerns.

Apathy of the government

A major portion of the narrative focuses on the callous attitude of the medical community and the role prostitution plays in the spread of HIV in India. However, toward the end of the narrative, a direct attack is made upon the Indian government as the main villain of the piece. It is held completely responsible for all the social, economic and legal conditions which exacerbate the AIDS situation in India.

The narrator holds the government of India responsible for not taking action against doctors who refuse to treat AIDS patients, and against those individuals are aware that they are infected and, for some reason, continue to spread the virus. The reporter blames the legal system for not recognizing the above as criminal acts. In other words, the text first empowers these dominant social structures with the prerogative to take action against those it deems to be 'criminals' in the AIDS scenario, and then it castigates them for failing to exercise these powers effectively.

The reporter hails the Union Minister of Health as the "man of the moment who can prevent a major national disaster." This statement connotes that all the power to remedy the AIDS situation in India lies in the hands of this one individual. And this one individual turns away from the camera refusing to answer any questions and thus, dodges not just the media but "the very issue itself." At this point in the narrative, there is a sense of ultimate desertion. The government, which has so much power, refuses to even speak about the issue, let alone act upon it. Thus, we have on our hands an evasive government which is blamed for failing to perform its duty of saving its people from an epidemic.

The construction of the last frame in the story closes the coffin-lid of blame on the government. Several open charges are made against it by the reporter. Standing clearly in front of the Indian Ministry of Health and

Family Welfare building — a signifier of the government's role in advancing the health and welfare of its population — the reporter spells out all the government has not done to address the AIDS hazard the country faces. In the words of the reporter, the government is guilty of not issuing directives to doctors to treat AIDS patients, for not taking action against doctors who turn AIDS patients away, for not ensuring safe standards for condom manufacturing, for having no policy for compensation of "innocent victims" of AIDS who are infected due to the "blatant" negligence of the medical community and for not making sure that the blood supply of the nation is safe.

Therefore, right at the end, the entire force of the narrative cannon balls upon the government, and heaps it with blame after blame. The government is accused of being ashamed to tell people how to save their lives. The reason for this is spelled out — AIDS is a sexually transmitted disease and hence, considered taboo. The government, the narrative connotes, does not want to soil its hands with an issue that has such socially and culturally negative connotations.

Miscellaneous targets of blame

Apart from the three main targets of blame discussed above, several other targets of blame emerge from the rhetoric of the narrative. For instance, AIDS itself is labelled as the "deadliest four letter word," "a death warrant," "a dead end street," and "a time bomb ticking toward explosion." It is a disease which is clearly out to destroy. The use of qualifiers such as the "lethal AIDS virus" which is the cause of the "impending plague" which "threatens to wipe out an era" indicate how the the disease itself is blamed for the overall suffering projected in the narrative.

The nation's ideology is also blamed for the spread of AIDS. The "West" is hailed for having achieved some measure of success in controlling the spread of the disease, the oppositional signification being that the "East," in this case India, has been unsuccessful at this endeavor. The Indian public is blamed for being in denial, and thinking about AIDS as "somebody else's problem." According to the narrative, India is still asleep and has not yet "woken up" to the reality of AIDS — it is ignorant.

The constant use of the term "ignorant" connotes that the ignorance of the population is one of the root causes of its sufferings. "AIDS: Don't Die of Ignorance," reads one banner. Prostitutes are labelled as being most ignorant and hence, most vulnerable to the virus. Doctors are labelled as ignorant, and accused for being so. In fact, the reporter announces how AIDS will spread the fastest in India than in any other country because of wide spread ignorance. Ignorance is pronounced to be the scourge of not just the AIDS patients but of the entire population.

Promiscuous behavior is another target of blame. A married woman having an extramarital affair is asked probing personal questions which affirm her promiscuity. She is portrayed as a potential source for the spread of the disease since she does not use condoms on a regular basis, and seems unaware of the nature of HIV. A military personnel, because of his promiscuous behavior, is also infected with the virus. "If you are promiscuous, use condoms," states the reporter by way of providing a solution to the issue of promiscuity. Hence, promiscuity coupled with ignorance, is projected as a lethal combination for the spread of the virus.

Moving from the issue of promiscuity to that of condom use, the narrative asserts that even if one uses condoms, there is no guarantee that a person will be safe. The blame is shifted to the manufacturers of condoms who are guilty of producing condoms which are either defective or too porous, fragile and of poor quality. Hence, they are to blame for aiding the virus to spread even when people engage in safe sex.

The issue of homosexuality is briefly touched upon. One reason for this may be that due to cultural restrictions, many societies in the East still do not openly engage in discourse on homosexuality. No judgment is passed since it is just not talked about. But the very fact that only in one instance a patient is asked if he'd had intercourse with a man connotes that homosexual contact is seen as a clear cause for the spread of the virus. The reporter asks probing questions such as how many times the patient had had intercourse with a man, and if he'd been forced into the act — another clear signification that homosexuality is to blame.

The silence of the rich and upper classes who are infected is also condemned by the narrator. This phenomenon is clearly illustrated through the very content of the text since the educated people who are AIDS patients are not interviewed, and those labelled as "illiterate" and "ignorant" are the ones with a voice throughout the narrative. The educated people who are interviewed are either members of the medical community or social workers, and none of these people are HIV positive —- they represent the 'healthy us' engaging in discourse about the 'diseased other' (Gilman, 1988).

Several layers of blame are evident throughout the narrative. One form of blame leads to another and the overwhelming message seems to be that someone has to be blamed for the AIDS situation in India. As is the case in AIDS discourses in many other parts of the world, there is always a finger pointed at someone or something. One reason for this could be, and this would specifically be the case in Eastern societies, that it is mostly the non-infected who engage in discourse about the disease since they do not have to fear the extreme stigma associated with the disease. And these 'healthy' voices find a way of purging themselves from the pollution connoted by the disease by laying the blame on the 'other.' And the fear which instigates this attribution of blame is that those who engage in blame discourse are aware that the AIDS virus does not respect income or education levels, and strikes whenever the opportunity presents itself — they too might be 'victims' some day.

Voices of authority

Throughout the narrative we never get a glimpse of the narrator (i.e., the reporter) until the very end when he wraps the story up for us. However, his voice is omnipresent throughout the narrative. We only hear him, see the people he interviews and the scenes he chooses to show us. His voice is like a looming presence which gives us not just the facts, but also passes judgments against people and institutions by assuming an overall journalistic stance of authority.

Journalism in India does not subscribe to the American tradition of reporting just the facts and steering clear of personal opinions. Opinions of the reporter are very much a part of the text. In keeping with this style of reporting, the reporter gives his opinion on most of the issues he covers. At the beginning of the narrative, for instance, he passes a sentence of doom by proclaiming that the country is heading toward a disaster of epic proportions. He also emphasizes that ignorance is "definitely" the root cause of the AIDS problem in India. These are just a few instances of his authoritative tone which is present throughout the narrative. He is the one with the final say on most matters touched upon in the text.

Another sign of the reporter's authoritative voice, coupled with connotations of discrimination according to social class, is inherent in the manner in which he interviews the AIDS patients. All these patients hail from the poorer and economically underprivileged classes of society, and they are mostly unaware of the true nature of AIDS. The reporter's tone is patronizing and often admonishing. He shows little concern or respect for these people's feelings or privacy since he asks them some very personal questions regarding their sexual practices which many of them seem hesitant to answer. For example, he asks a prostitute how many men she serves in day, an HIV positive patient if he'd had any sexual relations with men and how many times, and a married woman about the details of her extramarital affair. However, on the other hand, figures of authority who are interviewed, such as a World Health Organization official and AIDS activists and social workers, are asked less intrusive questions, and are treated with some degree of respect, presumably because of their higher position on the social ladder.

Evidence of the patriarchal stance of the reporter lies in the fact that all the experts on AIDS who are interviewed during the course of the narrative are men. The only female interviewed who is not a prostitute is a seemingly incompetent doctor who is unaware of the facts about AIDS. As far as the patients are concerned, both men and women are interviewed although the main focus is on female prostitutes. Also, in the narrative's context of promiscuity being one of the major causes for the spread of HIV in India, the reporter chooses to interrogate a woman and not a man. He almost scolds her for not using condoms while having intercourse with a man other than her husband — a strong sign that the reporter is the paternal figure who is admonishing the woman for straying.

The patriarchal stance is further enhanced by the fact that the role of the victim is so evident throughout the narrative. The AIDS patients are all "victims" of a system where the doctors are callous, the government is apathetic, condoms are sub-standard and where promiscuity and prostitution are rampant. The reporter assumes that it is his responsibility to condemn these social, economic and political anomalies, and speak on behalf of the 'victims" since they are "ignorant" and hence, presumably unable to speak for themselves. The reporter plays the role of the savior of the masses, and claims to know what is best for them.

Extensive use is made of statistics and survey results to back all the claims made by the reporter. These figures are the reporter's allies, and they legitimate his assertions of the great danger facing the country. Even the anchor begins the story with projections of the number of people who will be AIDS patients or HIV positive by the turn of the century. The metonymic association is that these numbers are of great importance, and that there is no questioning their authority. Claims on how serious the AIDS problem is in India is backed by precise numbers as is the claim that promiscuity is "rampant" in India. We are informed that 90% of the blood supply is unsafe in India, and that 52% of urban boys in Bombay have their first sexual encounter with prostitutes. Once there is evidence in the form of numbers, there seems to be no possibility of debating the issue. The audience is simply expected to accept these statistics at face value since the narrator connotes they are infallible.

Another ally the reporter uses to back his claims is the media itself — previous print media reports on AIDS. For example, in order to support the claims that ignorance about the disease is wide spread in India, that the infected rich people refuse to acknowledge their infection, that the blood supply of the nation is unsafe and that doctors at prominent hospitals turn AIDS patients away, the narrative focuses on articles which offer proof to these effects. We are exhorted to believe what the reporter states since the newspapers also reported these issues. Here we have the case of one medium seeking the support of another in order to lend legitimacy to its discourse.

Armed with statistical evidence, previous media reports and an omniscience about the AIDS situation in India, the reporter's narration is polarized in terms of blame and innocence, victims and victimizers, truthfulness and deception, ignorance and awareness, justice and injustice, concern and apathy and overall health versus wide spread disease. These layers of binary oppositions intertwine to generate the overwhelming meaning that one group is being persecuted by another, and that the end result can only be death and the triumph of disease.

The overall picture of AIDS in India

According to Fabrega (1974), disease discourses usually tend to describe the disease picture through four factors which affect the use, lack of use, or delay in use of medical facilities. These factors are:

1. Economic factors concerned with the ability to pay for medical services available, the demand for the service and the types of institutions affecting coverage for these services.
2. Sociostructural factors concerned with inefficient organization, types of services available, distance and other constraints hindering availability and the nature of the medical infrastructure.
3. Sociodemographic factors such as social class, age, sex, etc., of medical service consumers.

4. Psychological factors such as perceived need for care, attitudes toward physicians, definition of illness, and perceived health status.

Disease discourse centering around these factors usually subscribe to the Western model of medical thought or the scientific mode of perceiving illness. According to this mode, the medical establishment, which draws its power to heal from scientific knowledge, is in a position to cure the diseased. This outlook is synchronous with the Western rational way of thinking (Dingwall, 1976). And it is because of this very reason that AIDS discourse in West has been so so controversial. The scientists, in this case, have still not been able to conquer the disease to which so many are succumbing. Since this implies a defeat of the scientific process, various other factors are evoked in order to pass on the blame, and keep the reputation of science intact.

The overall picture of AIDS we get from the *Newstrack* feature shows signs of conformity with the West's discourse on AIDS. The scientific structure is never blamed (although doctors who are part of the structure are) — several other social structures are. As mentioned earlier, the narrative praises the West for having achieved some measure of success in curbing the spread of AIDS. This implies that this is the ideal to be followed, and that the East has failed to emulate the success of the West. Although the narrative does not describe how the West has achieved success, it does explicate why the East, specifically India, hasn't. Examining the narrative in terms of the four factors mentioned above, the underlying semiosis reveals how most of that which is projected as 'wrong' with the AIDS situation in India is an antithesis of Western rationality.

First, the economic factors. The majority of the "victims" of AIDS in India, according to the narrative, hail from the poorer sections of society.

Hence, it is implied that they are unable to pay for efficient treatment. The wide spread poverty of the nation is identified as a main reason for the spread of the virus since poverty usually results in illiteracy and ignorance. Poverty also forces women into prostitution and infected people to donate blood. Therefore, the absence of the medical infrastructure of the West, and the poverty of the East is the scourge of the East.

The inefficient medical infrastructure of the nation is identified as the main sociostructural factor which aids the rapid spread of HIV. Doctors deceive and refuse to treat patients. The government refuses to provide the medical community with "guidelines" on how to treat AIDS patients. Condoms are either defective or unavailable to prostitutes and their clients. Hence, the irrational attitude and inefficiency of the medical community and its support services is identified as an area in which the East has failed in addressing the AIDS epidemic.

Sociodemographic factors, such as social class, play an important role in the spread of HIV in the context of this narrative. Those from the 'lower classes' are more vulnerable to the disease because of their occupations, and more likely to spread it because of their ignorance. The 'upper classes', the narrative explicates, refuse to talk about the disease since it is a disease of the 'lower classes,' and it would be below their social status to openly discuss the problem. The caste system is still a prominent tradition in many parts of India where about 80% of the population is Hindu. Caste is signified by the profession of the individual. According to the narrative, those in higher professions either refuse to either associate themselves with the disease, or are portrayed as inefficient, such as the medical community. This divide according to social class is another reason why

India has not been able to tackle the problem of AIDS as a disease which can strike anybody and not just the 'lower classes.' Those in the 'higher' social positions can make policy, educate the people and remedy the situation to some extent — but they prefer to remain silent. The East's inability to overcome the taboo associated with AIDS is another reason for its "doom."

The psychological factors assume importance in this narrative, according to which most risk groups are unaware of the deadly nature of HIV and hence, do not see any cause for worry. The patients are shown as having blind faith in the doctors' powers to cure them. "I have been cured," says one patient who has only a few months to live. But he is unaware of this fact. The disease is not perceived as life-threatening or contagious because the patients are not made aware of the facts. And this perception of the disease, which is an irrational perception, is another reason why the East has been unable to control the spread of HIV.

To judge the AIDS situation in India according to Western standards would be inappropriate since basic infrastructures and cultural beliefs differ vastly. The narrative offers solutions in Western terms. For example, it states that people should practice safe sex. In a country with a population of 930 million, neither the resources nor the cultural beliefs exist to ensure safe sex. Blame is freely assigned, and moral judgments are repeatedly made. But no attempt is made to define the AIDS picture in terms of possible solutions compatible with cultural beliefs. practices and indigenous social structures. The 'other' remain the 'other,' and they are labelled as "victims of a silent conspiracy."

Hence, although *Newstrack's* daring expose of the AIDS situation in India ostensibly attacks the dominant structures of the Indian social and political fabric which are apathetic to the epidemic, the finger of blame is seldom replaced by attempts to provide culturally specific discourse which could effectively address the problems of stigma and persecution. We are simply left with a cathartic sensation of being the 'healthy us' sympathizing with the 'diseased other' who continue to remain in an irrevocable state of being diseased — the only consolation seems to lie in the practice of assigning blame.

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A WAR BY ANY OTHER NAME:
A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF FALKLANDS/MALVINAS WAR COVERAGE IN U.S. AND LATIN AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS

by

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ABSTRACT

In the tradition of cultural studies, coverage of the Falklands/Malvinas War is examined in four major newspapers: The New York Times (United States), El Mercurio (Chile), Excelsior (Mexico) and El Universal (Venezuela). The textual analysis of the news stories presents us with four different versions/constructions/definitions of this particular war. The media in each country presented a version of the events that was compatible with the country's diplomatic position.

INTRODUCTION

On April 2, 1982 Argentina invaded the Falkland/Malvinas Islands. This action initiated a conflict of international proportions which soon escalated into a full-fledged war with Great Britain. The invasion was received in Argentina with ecstatic jubilation. In contrast, reactions in Great Britain ranged from shock to wounded pride (Beck, 1988). The end of the crisis came ten weeks later with Argentina's surrender on June 14. "It was a textbook example of a limited war—limited in time, in location, in objectives and in means" (Freedman, 1982, p. 196).

Ostensibly the situation was fairly simple: the two sides were clearly defined and easily identifiable and the conflict had a definite beginning and an unambiguous end. However, the dispute that was at its root, the question of sovereignty over the archipelago, is still unresolved.

The Falklands/Malvinas War became a major news story and was followed with interest all around the world. People's knowledge and perceptions of the conflict were heavily dependent on media accounts of the events. The media construct and define the events for their audience assigning to these events different degrees of importance. In a very important sense, news stories are versions of reality. Media accounts, news stories, are narratives that "acquire layers of meanings in the course of their use in everyday life; some are authentic, others are contrived and all are constructed" (Aulich, 1992, p. 3). Furthermore, media coverage of war is a significant topic since the media almost always play a meaningful role in the conflict. There are tensions between the need for secrecy of the military, on one hand, and the need for publicity of the media and the citizens right to know and be informed.

In the tradition of cultural studies, this study explores how the Falklands/Malvinas War was constructed by four major newspapers: The New York Times (United States), El Mercurio (Chile), Excelsior (Mexico) and El Universal (Venezuela). The media aspects of this conflict have been explored from the British side (Hooper, 1982; Greenberg, 1983; Harris, 1983; Adams, 1986; Kennedy, 1993), and from the Argentine side (Fox, 1984; Caistor, 1993). But how was this war covered in other countries? Is there a relationship between foreign policy and international news coverage?

This study addresses the relationships between: (a) News coverage and foreign policy. (b) News coverage and the construction of events. (c) News coverage and the "available stock of meanings" (Hall, 1975, p. 12) that the newspapers assumed and used in their construction of this specific event: the Falklands/ Malvinas War.

CONTEXT

The Falklands/Malvinas War

The Falkland/Malvinas Islands are located in the South Atlantic Ocean, 300 miles east of the Argentine coast, 340 miles northeast of Cape Horn (Rasor, 1992). The population in 1982 was about 1,800, most of them living in the capital, Port Stanley/Puerto Argentino. The "Kelpers," as the inhabitants are called in reference to the seaweed which is copious in the islands (Rasor, 1992), are almost totally British, and "almost totally separated, by both language and politics, from the continent" (Strebeigh, 1981, p. 86).

The confrontation that riveted the world from April to mid-June of 1982 was the escalation of a 150-year old dispute between Argentina and the United Kingdom over the Falkland/ Malvinas Islands. The roots of the dispute lie on the differences between the Argentine and British versions of the history of these islands[1]. Both sides claim discovery and in consequence ownership of the archipelago.

In 1965, the United Nations called on Argentina and Great Britain to negotiate over their respective claims to the islands. Another U.N resolution urging a settlement of the dispute was called in 1974. Peter Beck (1991) noted that in the beginning of 1982, the Falklands/Malvinas question occupied the number 242 on the list of priorities of the British foreign office. Meanwhile, the issue had become the number one priority for the Argentine government since December 1981 (Cardoso et al, 1983).

On Thursday April 1, 1982, British intelligence reports indicated a likely Argentine invasion of the Falklands/ Malvinas (Adams, 1986). Great Britain took several diplomatic steps, including a request to the United States for help in convincing the Argentine government to stop their invasion plans (Haig, 1984). Argentina went ahead with its plans. By April 2, it had seized the capital Port Stanley. The United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 502 on April 3[2]. The resolution demanded Argentina's retreat. Meanwhile, Argentine forces captured the South Georgia Islands and Britain announced the formation of a task force.

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[1] Peter Beck (1988) describes the two versions in pp. 29-83 of his book The Falkland Islands as an international problem.

[2] The vote was 10 for (Great Britain, Uganda, Zaire, Guyana, Togo, Jordan, Ireland, Japan, France and the United States), four against (Spain, Panama, China and Poland), and one abstention (the Soviet Union).

Latin American countries supported Argentina's claims over the islands. However, they were divided in their judgment of the invasion. One side, represented by Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Mexico, insisted that the procedure was unacceptable to the international community. The other position, exemplified by Perú and Venezuela, argued that by avoiding negotiations for 150 years, Great Britain had left the Argentines with no other recourse than the use of force.

On April 8, U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig began his "shuttle diplomacy" efforts (Haig, 1984). His mediation attempts failed and on April 30, the U.S. openly sided with Great Britain provoking feelings of betrayal in most Latin American nations (Chang-Rodríguez, 1991). The next day, Britain started the naval bombardment of East Falkland/Isla Soledad's airstrips. The Falklands/Malvinas crisis had escalated into a full-fledged war. At this point, Latin American nations rallied around Argentina in support of its cause and classified Great Britain as the "real aggressor" in the crisis (Kirkpatrick, 1989-1990). Only Colombia and Chile remained neutral.

On the second day of fighting, the Argentine cruiser "General Belgrano" was sunk by British torpedoes while being outside the exclusion zone. Two days later, Britain lost the ship "HMS Sheffield" to Exocet missiles.

British forces landed on Port San Carlos on May 21 establishing a beach head from which to advance toward Port Stanley/Puerto Argentino. On May 29, Britain captured Goose Green and Port Darwin taking 1,500 prisoners (Rasor, 1992). British advances were reflected in a hardening of its diplomatic position. On June 4, it vetoed Argentina's call for a cease fire in the United Nations (Adams, 1986).

June 12 marked the beginning of the battle for Port Stanley/Puerto Argentino which ended with Argentina's surrender on June 14 and the reoccupation of the islands by Great Britain. But the war's end did not bring a solution to the sovereignty dispute. The islands are still claimed by Argentina based on what they define as their "historical rights." While the British base their claims on the principle of self-determination of the islanders. The matter is still unresolved.

Mexico and Excelsior

In 1929 different Mexican revolutionary factions came together and formed the "Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI)" [Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)]. Since then, the PRI has dominated Mexican politics in particular, and Mexican life in general. It is the longest governing party in the world (Heuvel & Dennis, 1995).

Alisky (1981) classified Mexico under the category "nations with media guidance" (p. 27). Mainstream media rally around the power elite, the established leadership, the PRI. Historically, the Mexican government has given precedence to the Revolution's goals: land reform, development, industrialization and the nurturing of Mexican nationalism. Press freedom and other political freedoms were not among these goals.

In the 1980s a third of the Mexican adult population was unable to read. Less than 20 percent of the population read newspapers. Moreover, 60 percent of the total daily newspaper circulation was concentrated in the three large urban centers: Mexico City, Guadalajara and Monterrey (Alisky, 1981).

After a slight loss in circulation, Excelsior remained the leading daily in Mexico at the beginning of the 1980's[3] (Alisky, 1981). Its layout is old-fashioned, characterized by dense writing and few photos. It is not reader-friendly. Front pages usually carry a banner headline and at least 15 stories, all of which have small deck headlines and jump to the inside of the paper, where they can still jump from one page to another. International news sources vary from renowned wire services usually AP, UPI, and AFP to special correspondents when considered necessary.

During the year of the Falklands/Malvinas War, Mexico was suffering the rigors of a grave economic crisis. President Miguel de la Madrid was forced to devaluate the peso, nationalize the banks and establish monetary exchange controls (Chang-Rodríguez, 1991). However, during the ten weeks of the war, media attention was focused on the conflict. At one point, Excelsior had two special correspondents stationed in Buenos Aires and one in London.

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[3] Today, Excelsior is the second newspaper in Mexico. Conservative daily El Universal is the circulation leader (Heuvel & Dennis, 1995).

Chile and El Mercurio

Argentina and Chile have many things in common: a population with a strong European inheritance, a very high literacy rate (90 percent), and a border. Chile and Argentina have a territorial dispute regarding the Beagle Channel that dates back to 1843 (Embassy of the Argentine Republic, 1978). At times, both countries have called each other "expansionists" and in 1978 they were on the brink of war (Bruno, 1981).

It was widely believed in Chile that Argentina could have invaded the Beagle Channel islands instead of the Falklands/Malvinas (Sanfuentes, 1992). Although Chile condemned the invasion as an act of unwarranted aggression from Argentina, it later declared and maintained a neutral position throughout the conflict.

In August 1973, General Augusto Pinochet assumed power and enforced repressive anti-communist policies in every avenue of Chilean life, including freedom of expression and freedom of the press. The country was (and is still) basically run by a small group of families who are decision-makers in the government, the military, the business sector and the media. These elites were closely associated to the Pinochet government.

El Mercurio, which was considered one of the best newspapers in Latin America (Merrill, 1968), has now a somewhat tarnished image because of its association with the Pinochet government. The paper is owned by the Edwards, a leading Anglo-Chilean family. El Mercurio follows a conservative, pro-establishment line. During the Pinochet era, only those newspapers owned by the Edwards and Picó families were allowed to be published (Heuvel & Dennis, 1995).

El Mercurio is characterized by featuring three pages of news and editorials in its first section, followed by an extensive section of society pages, whose presence is an indication of the importance of the elites in the country's life. The international news typically appear at the end of the first section. These news stories are largely drawn from wire services, especially AP, UPI, AFP, ANSA of Italy and EFE of Spain.

Venezuela and El Universal

Alisky (1981) classified Venezuela and Costa Rica as the only Latin American nations "with media freedom" (p. 122). In 1982, Venezuela was still considered Latin America's wealthiest nation in terms of annual income. Oil rich and with a democratic tradition dating back to 1958, Venezuela boasted the freest press in Latin America.

With an 88 percent literacy rate and a 75 percent urban population (Alisky, 1981), it is no surprise that the two most influential dailies are based in the capital, Caracas: El Universal and El Nacional. El Universal does not have an explicit editorial line, but prints a variety of views on its op-ed pages (Heuvel & Dennis, 1995). However, it is perceived as a conservative paper in contrast with the more liberal El Nacional.

El Universal's front page typically features at least 15 stories. Most of them consist of only the headline and deck headlines; the text is found in the inside pages. Headline size indicates the story's relative importance to the reader. Kicker lines are consistently used to clarify or qualify the headlines. International news stories are featured on the first section of the newspaper, usually on section 1, page 6. These stories are exclusively from news services, especially from AP, UPI, AFP, Reuters, ANSA, EFE, DPA, and TASS of the Soviet Union.

Venezuela shares borders with Colombia, Brazil and Guyana. In the past 150 years, border disputes have been a factor in Venezuela's history. However, the most important one is the ongoing polemic with eastside neighbor Guyana, a former British colony. In 1970, twelve years before the Falklands/Malvinas War, Guyana and Venezuela signed the Port of Spain Protocol by which the controversy entered a dormant stage (Singh, 1982). In March of 1982, before Argentina invaded the Falklands/Malvinas, the Venezuelan government announced that it would not renew the protocol (Fenty, 1982; Braveboy-Wagner, 1984).

Although Venezuela has never resorted to warfare in any of its territorial disputes, from time to time some voices rise to favor a military solution, especially to the Guyana problem. Militaristic talk increased during the Falklands/Malvinas War. Venezuela took a definite pro-Argentina stance during the conflict. More importantly, coverage of this war was immersed in, and deeply influenced by the controversy with Guyana.

The United States and The New York Times

The United States were immediately drawn into the Falklands dispute. Initial responses showed a lot of ambivalence from the U.S. government. A neutral stance was chosen at the beginning and attempts at mediation were held by secretary of State Alexander Haig (Rasor, 1992).

Although the U.S. government never took a stance regarding what it defined as "the substance of the dispute," that is the sovereignty issue[4], eventually the United States supported Great Britain in the conflict. This support was translated into sanctions against Argentina and British access to American weapons, logistics, intelligence, communications, and base facilities (Weinberger, 1992).

In 1980, The New York Times was ranked as "the best or near-best paper in the United States" (Merrill, 1980, p. 220). Of all American newspapers it was the closest to being a newspaper of record. A definite agenda-setter, many of its readers are very influential in American life. It also boasts an international readership, which makes it a member of the world's elite press (Merrill, 1980). One of its strengths is its international news coverage, which is considered unrivalled. Thoroughness characterizes The New York Times. Its coverage of the Falklands/Malvinas controversy was no exception. Special correspondents in London, Buenos Aires and Washington provided eyewitness accounts from these places.

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[4] It must be pointed out, however, that in their respective memoirs, both Alexander Haig and then-Minister of Defense Caspar Weinberger, stress that they considered the islands as being British (Haig, 1984; Weinberger, 1990).

Its front page presents five to seven stories that usually jump to the inside pages. Differences in type and placement assign degrees of importance to the news. The lead story is always placed at the top right-hand side. Banner headlines are unusual; therefore when one of them is present, the story is automatically emphasized. Although by 1980 the Times had editorially supported eight Democrats and four Republicans for president, Merrill (1980) described its editorial line as "independent."

FOREIGN NEWS AND FOREIGN POLICY

Many researchers have devoted themselves to finding explanations for foreign news coverage patterns. Some of them believe that ideology is a strong influence (Gerbner, 1964; Hallin, 1987; Graber, 1989). National interest has also been stressed as an influential factor (Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Chomsky, 1987; Skurnik, 1981) as well as cultural and geographical proximity (Graber, 1989; Galtung & Ruge, 1965).

Wang (1992) compared the media coverage from six different countries of the 1989 Chinese students demonstration. His results indicated that political ideology and diplomatic sensitivity or government interest influenced the overall direction of the coverage and its actual content and themes. These findings seem consonant with Vilanilam (1983) who studied and compared the influence of foreign policy in the U.S. and India's press systems. Vilanilam concluded that geographic proximity of the reported country was not as important as foreign policy significance to the reporting country's press system. These findings direct us to study the delicate relationship between foreign news and foreign policy.

Bullion (1983) analyzed press roles in foreign policy reporting and concluded that "the more authoritarian the society, the more compatible or complementary are press and diplomacy, and the more the press serves as a policy instrument" (p. 187). The implication is that in the United States, a libertarian society, the press seldom serves as a policy instrument.

However, both Welch (1972) and Malek (1988/89) found a noticeable similarity between the U.S. foreign policy toward Indochina and Iran and The New York Times editorial stance. Moreover, Shoemaker, Danielian and Brendlinger (1991) found that events which occur in nations politically and/or economically significant to the U.S. are more likely to be considered newsworthy. If this is true, then the Administration definitely sets the agenda for foreign news.

Herman and Chomsky (1988) believe that the U.S. media do not perform the normative watchdog role for foreign policy that people assume the media play. They described a propaganda model, or set of "filters" through which the premises of discourse and interpretation are fixed. For Herman and Chomsky, the media actually contribute to the preservation of the status quo by forming a seamless alliance between corporate and government interests. Rachlin (1988) also stresses the existence of a hegemonic culture that fixes postulates and establishes frames of reference. In 1993 Herman analyzed paired case studies regarding foreign policy performance, human rights violation, plane shoot-downs and third world elections and how these were reported in the media. He concluded that "the mainstream media tend to follow a state agenda in reporting on foreign policy" (p. 45). Lester (1994) has also done work supporting these contentions.

CULTURAL STUDIES: U.K., U.S., LATIN AMERICA

Cultural studies challenge the traditional positivist media research and break with its dominant model of stimulus-response. Its British strand shifts research from a behavioral to an ideological perspective (Hall, 1982); thus, the research framework for British cultural studies focuses on the ideological role of the media, which are viewed as a crucial cultural and ideological force. Further, the reconstitution of the ideas and behaviors shared by the people who produce and consume the cultural texts of a particular society is achieved by analyzing these texts and consequently the society's culture.

British cultural scholars stress that there is no way to know reality directly; it is the effects of reality that we study. Reality is defined, and this definition cannot be divorced from ideology. It cannot be divorced from power either. Who defines reality? How are events signified in a particular way? Who decides what code will be used for this signification/definition? There is a power structure that determines the representation/definition of reality. This representation/ definition is in tune with a dominant ideology. Alternative representations/definitions are treated from the dominant ideology's perspective and tend to be silenced, or distorted, or presented as deviant from the "norm."

Budd, Entman and Steinman (1990) argue that American cultural studies are not as critical as their British counterpart. American cultural scholars avoid Marxist analysis and assign more power to the audience. They also shy away from political-economic approaches which minimize the commodification of audiences. Ideology is not at the center of the analysis: "...a form of cultural studies that does not perforce reduce culture to ideology, social conflict to class conflict, consent to compliance, action to reproduction, or communication to coercion" (Carey, 1989, p. 109).

In Latin America, there is a brand of cultural studies that is "more rooted in the life of the everyday than anything that passes for cultural studies in the USA" (Davies, 1995, p. 164). Its research is directed toward topics of identity, popular, imperial and political culture. It is underpinned by the particular elements of Latin America's stark contrasts and uneven modernity.

> The systems by which meanings are circulated in a society resemble a maelstrom rather than an engineering diagram. It is a system of conflicting currents in which the slope of the ground always favors one set, but whose flow can be disrupted and even diverted if the terrain is rocky enough (Fiske, 1994, p. 198).

Latin American cultural studies tackle the region's own maelstrom. By analyzing a text—newspaper coverage of the Falklands/Malvinas War—we attempt to study the conflicting currents and the slope of the U.S., Mexican, Chilean and Venezuelan grounds during the South Atlantic conflict.

METHOD

Cultural studies has no unique or distinct methodology. The choice of procedure depends on the objective of the research, on the questions being asked and on their context. Textual analysis in the tradition of Stuart Hall's "Introduction" to Paper Voices was the chosen methodology for this study. Textual analysis recognizes that texts are polysemic. That is, they do not have "a" meaning. Textual analysis practitioners argue that meaning is a social production and that language "is the means by which the role of the media is changed from that of conveyors of reality to that of constructors of meaning" (Curtin, 1995, p. 3).

The first task was the selection of the newspapers/countries to be analyzed.This selection was made using the following criteria: (1) the countries should represent a North-South contrast, since the actual Falklands/Malvinas War became a North-South conflict, (2) the Latin American countries chosen should exhibit diversity among their domestic situations and among their positions regarding the South Atlantic War, (3) the newspapers should be considered papers "of record" in their respective countries, and (4) the U.S. newspaper should have a strong international news coverage tradition.

The first stage of the analysis involved a "long preliminary soak" (Hall, 1975, p. 15) in the text. Every story related to the conflict, that was printed during that time period (74 days) in those four newspapers, was read. Focusing on the particular stories while preserving "the big picture," and choosing a representative, exemplar (sample) for closer analysis, were the immediate results of this first stage.

The sample was selected on the basis of specific dates that were crucial in the conflict. The selected dates were: (1) April 3 to April 8, the first week of coverage, (2) April 30 to May 5, when the United States openly sided with Great Britain, the war started, the British sunk the "General Belgrano" and Argentina sunk the "HMS Sheffield," (3) May 28 to May 30, Battle of Darwin and Goose Green, and (5) June 13 to June 15, the last three days of coverage. Eighteen days of coverage were selected for the next stage.

The second stage involved the close reading of the chosen text and preliminary identification of discursive strategies present. This reading was done on a date by date basis and the findings were noted on an "analysis sheet" that was placed with the four newspapers of the day. Placement, size, and headlines were noted along with the narrative structure, tone, stylistic intensification, the use of metaphors, and the omissions detected. Contradictions, similarities and contrasts between the different newspapers were also noted.

The interpretation of the findings within the larger framework of the study constituted the third stage of the procedure. The "analysis sheets" were analyzed as pointers to the text. Recurrent patterns were noted, and the dominant reading was identified. The analysis yielded a wealth of findings— only one of which is presented here— namely, the different forms of "cultural consensus" regarding the Falklands/Malvinas War that were constructed in the four newspapers which were then contrasted with the foreign policy stance of each country.

ANALYSIS

April 3: The conflict begins

On April 3, 1982, newspapers of the world heralded the news that Argentina had occupied the Falklands/Malvinas. The four newspapers of this study were no exception. The wording of their front-page headlines defined the Argentinean action and provided a framework for the ensuing conflict's coverage.

The New York Times' "Argentina seizes Falkland Islands; British ships move" ("Argentina seizes," 1982) establishes that Argentina has grabbed the islands which are called "Falkland." With its choice of the verb "seize," The New York Times framed the action as Argentina virtually snatching the islands, implying that these islands do not belong to the seizing country. By calling the islands "Falkland," The New York Times takes a position regarding their ownership. All the related headlines of the day call the islands "Falkland."[5] The only mention of the name "Malvinas" is buried in an inside story: "the islands, which the Argentines call Islas Malvinas" (Gwertzman, 1982, p.6). In this statement, the Argentines are isolated as the only users of the term "Malvinas," ignoring other Spanish-speaking and Portuguese-speaking countries who also use this term. The statement also establishes an Us:Other ratio (Lester-Massman,1991), in which the "other," the "different" is Argentina. The reader is lead to believe that the norm, the "real" name of the islands is "Falklands," not "Malvinas." This definition of the conflict in which the norm, the legitimate, the way things should be is the British way, and the deviant, the illegitimate, and the exception is the Argentinean way, will describe most of The New York Times coverage of the ten-week conflict.

"Ocupa Argentina las Malvinas; GB rompe relaciones" [Argentina occupies the Malvinas; GB breaks ties] (Herrero, 1982). This was the front-page banner headline with which Excelsior announced the invasion of the islands. The choice of the verb "occupy" suggests a less aggressive

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[5] Falkland Islands at a glance. (1982, April 3). The New York Times, p.A6.
Middleton, Drew (1982).Falkland conflict may test the new Royal Navy. (April 3). The New York Times, p.A6.

Argentina than The New York Times' choice of "seize." The islands are called "Malvinas" in the headline and throughout the day's coverage of the events. In the main story, datelined in Buenos Aires, we find: "las Malvinas—que los británicos denominan Falkland Islands" [the Malvinas—which the British denominate Falkland Islands] (Herrero, 1982, p.15A). In this case, an Us:Other ratio is established in which the "other," is Great Britain. As explained before, the creation of this ratio implies the definition of a norm and a deviation (from the norm). In this case, Excelsior establishes the term "Malvinas" as the norm, and the term "Falklands" as the deviation. As was the case with The New York Times, the reporter singles out "the British" as users of the term "Falklands," bypassing the fact that the term "Falklands" is dominant in a large sector of the world.

In its editorial "Precipitación Argentina" [Argentinean hastiness], Excelsior stresses that the islands belonged to Argentina "hasta el momento en que la expansión británica lo hizo objeto de su conquista" [until the moment in which the British expansion made it an object of its conquests] ("Precipitación Argentina, 1982, p.A6). However, the same editorial underscores the recklessness of the Argentinean action and places it outside the realm of what is considered acceptable behavior among nations. "El procedimiento seguido no encaja, por su cariz unilateral y violento, en el marco de sistemas que deben proseguir los países civilizados" [the procedure doesn't fit, for its unilateral and violent overtones, in the framework of the systems that should be followed by civilized countries] (p.A6). This is the main characteristic of Excelsior's coverage: the cultural ties between Argentina and Mexico and the Argentinean right to the islands are never denied; but the invasion is not condoned. The conflict, then, is defined as an "occupation" by force of the islands.

"Invasión argentina sin resistencia" [Argentinean invasion without resistance] proclaimed El Mercurio's front page on April 3, 1982, giving Argentina the role of invader, of trespasser. An invasion is a form of aggression and that is exactly the depiction of the conflict by El Mercurio. The kicker line, "Archipiélago de las Malvinas" [Malvinas Archipelago] ("Invasión argentina," 1982, p.A1), takes second place behind "Argentina." The message is clear: Argentina invaded, there was no resistance, and it happened to take place in the "Malvinas." The islands are not important at this point. El Mercurio gives preeminence to the subject, the perpetrator Argentina and defines the conflict as an invasion, an infringement. Argentina is the aggressor.

El Universal's main headline is very similar to the one in Excelsior. It describes Argentina's action as an "occupation." "Argentina ocupó las Malvinas en operación naval y aérea" [Argentina occupied the Malvinas in a naval and air operation] ("Argentina ocupó," 1982, p.1-1). Moreover, the third deck headline of the story voices Argentina's own interpretation/justification of the actions taken: "El mandatario argentino anunció al país que no se trata de una invasión sino de una recuperación de ese territorio en poder de los ingleses desde 1833" [The Argentinean head of government announced to the country that this is not an invasion but the recuperation of the territory that has been under British power since 1833] ("Argentina ocupó," 1982, p.1-1). The conflict then, is defined as the "recovery" of territory originally possessed by Argentina. "No se trata de una invasión sino de una contrainvasión" [It is not an invasion, but a counterinvasion] (Rechani, 1982, p. 1-2), the "original" invasion being Great Britain's takeover of the islands more than a 100 years ago. This justification/legitimization of Argentina's actions will characterize most of El Universal's coverage throughout the conflict. The Venezuelan newspaper defines the conflict as a recovery by Argentina of what is rightfully theirs. The invasion is presented as the way to regain the "normal" condition of the islands, that is the Falklands/Malvinas are Argentinean.

April 4: U.N. Resolution 502

On this date, The New York Times' front page presents six different stories/issues to its readers, among them the Falklands/ Malvinas conflict. The main headline for this particular story announced: "London ordering 35-ship task force to the Falklands." Two deck headlines announcing reports datelined in the United Nations and London are placed under the main headline. "U.N. asks pullout" is the deck headline for a story from the United Nations. "The

Security Council demanded today that Argentine forces withdraw immediately from the Falkland Islands which they seized from Britain Friday" (Nossiter, 1982, p. 1A). Both in the headline and in this sentence, the U.N./Security Council is the subject of the statement, the one that performs the action, "demanding" Argentina's withdrawal from the "Falkland Islands."

In contrast, Excelsior's front page displays a banner headline in which Great Britain is the subject. "Logra Inglaterra una condena contra Argentina en la ONU" [England achieves U.N. condemnation of Argentina] ("Logra Inglaterra, 1982, p. 1A). Attention here is centered around "England" and its "achievement." The U.N. is placed in a secondary position with respect to Britain. Under the banner headline, in a smaller font, a deck headline declares: "exige que se retire del archipiélago" [Demands that it withdraws from the archipelago] ("Logra Inglaterra, 1982, p. 1A). By being placed under "England achieves..." the subject of the deck headline then becomes "England." The reader's impression is that "England demands" Argentina's retreat, instead of being a U.N. exigency.

Like in The New York Times, the U.N. Security Council is the subject in El Mercurio's front-page headline. And like in The New York Times, the story is second in importance to the reports about the British task force being sent to the islands. "Demandan inmediato retiro de Argentina" [Demands Argentina's immediate withdrawal] is the headline of the story that interests us. It is preceded by the kicker line, "Consejo de Seguridad de la ONU:" [U.N. Security Council:] ("Demandan inmediato," 1982, p. A1). The kicker presents the subject, the Security Council.

El Universal's main headline refers to Venezuela expressing its solidarity to Argentina. A secondary headline mentions that England is sending a "portaviones" [carrier] ("Inglaterra envía," 1982, p. 1-1) to the islands, not a task force, just a carrier. Third in importance, the headline: "La ONU exige retiro de Argentina" [The U.N. demands Argentina's withdrawal] ("La ONU," 1982, p. 1-1) tops a three-line story from AP's wire service, which very succinctly describes the Security Council vote and the content of its resolution. By placing it as third in importance, El Universal leads its readers to also consider the story as being third in importance. The fact that the story is only three lines long contributes also to its diminished importance to Venezuelan readers.

On this date, El Universal's emphasis on Venezuela's and Venezuelans' solidarity with Argentina is patent. While the main headlines of The New York Times, Excelsior and El Mercurio were dedicated to the United Nations resolution that Argentina should pullout from the islands, El Universal's front-page headline read: "Gobierno venezolano expresó solidaridad con Argentina" [Venezuelan government expressed solidarity with Argentina] ("Gobierno venezolano," 1982, p.1-1). In the same issue there are five stories about different Venezuelan sectors expressing their solidarity with the Argentinean action. The reader is lead to believe that there is a consensus among Venezuelans regarding this conflict. No alternative views are presented. This amazing uniformity is displayed in El Universal throughout the conflict.

May 2: First Attacks.

The conflict has become the most important story in The New York Times. A big banner headline indicates the importance given to the story. "Air and sea battles erupt off Falklands as Argentina counters attacks by British" (Air and sea," 1982, p. A1). Under this headline, two stories datelined in Buenos Aires and London share equal importance. The story from Buenos Aires is headlined "Ships reported hit, Buenos Aires also claims 2 planes shot down, 2 others damaged" (Schumacher, 1982^{b}, p.A1). The headline for the London story is "Bases are shelled" (Apple, Jr., 1982^{a}, p. A1). There are evident differences between these headlines. The choice of verbs is critical to the reporting of these actions. Buenos Aires "claims," which means that Buenos Aires asserts in the face of possible contradiction, that two British planes were shot down. Ships are "reported" hit by Buenos Aires, while reports from London assert that bases "are" shelled, which implies that the mentioned shelling "is" a fact. The headlines of both stories do not imply that the reports have the same degree of truth in them.

El Mercurio's main headline highlights the British attack: "Fuerzas británicas atacaron las Malvinas por aire y mar" [British forces attacked the Malvinas by air and sea] ("Fuerzas británicas, 1982, p. A1). The story is accompanied by a photograph of a British plane in action. The emphasis is placed on the British side and no Argentine counterattack is mentioned in the front page. Only a deck headline asserts that "ambos bandos proclamaron perjuicios y bajas en el enemigo" [both sides proclaimed losses and casualties in the enemy] ("Fuerzas británicas, 1982, p. A1).

In contrast, Excelsior focuses on Argentina. The banner headline voices General Galtieri's words: "Se combate en las Malvinas; costará vidas" [Fighting in the Malvinas; it will cost lives]. A large deck headline asserts "pérdidas británicas; falló un desembarco" [British losses; failed landing] ("Se combate," 1982, p. 1A). Moreover, the front page displays two stories from Buenos Aires and no stories from London. In consequence, the day's events are construed as negative to the British side.

Argentina is also the protagonist in El Universal's front page: "Argentina derribó aviones y dañó barcos británicos" [Argentina downs planes and damages British ships]. British actions are mentioned only in the kicker line, which is a third of the size of the headline, "tras el bombardeo en el aeropuerto de las Malvinas" [after the bombardment of the Malvinas airport] ("Argentina derribó," 1982, p. 1-1). It is important to point out that there is no mention of the fact that it was Great Britain who bombarded the airport. A casual reader may not realize this fact, and perhaps may even believe that the bombardment was executed by Argentina. Furthermore, due to the relative sizes of the kicker line and the headline, El Universal readers will assume that Argentina's actions, shooting down two planes and damaging ships, are more important than the British attack to the islands' airport. El Universal's front page depicts the day's events as a definite "win" for Argentina.

May 3: Sinking of the "Belgrano"

While The New York Times and El Mercurio displayed front-page headlines about this incident, Excelsior and El Universal had no headlines about it. For The New York Times, this is the day's most important story. A headline announcing "Argentine cruiser damaged in British submarine attack outside Falkland war zone" is accompanied by a photograph of the cruiser ("Argentine cruiser," 1982, p. A1), and by two stories datelined in Buenos Aires and London. The Buenos Aires story reports that Argentina has acknowledged that the Belgrano has been torpedoed (Schumacher, 1982a). The London story explains Britain's reasons for hitting the cruiser "on the edge" of the war zone (Borders, 1982b, p. A1). None of the stories mention whether the "Belgrano" has been definitely lost, or if there were any casualties.

The top third of El Mercurio's front page boasts a photograph of the ill-fated cruiser. Under the picture, the headline announces: "Torpedeado crucero 'Belgrano'" [Torpedoed cruiser 'Belgrano'] ("Torpedeado," 1982, p. A1). The story is from UPI's wire service. Deck headlines report that Argentina acknowledges that the cruiser "fue alcanzado y sufrió averías" [was hit and damaged] ("Torpedeado," 1982, p. A1), and that the British Ministry of Defense expressed that the cruiser represented a menace to the task force.

Excelsior, on the other hand, does not mention the incident in its front page, which is dedicated to report on Latin American feelings toward the U.S.-Great Britain alliance ("Repudio," 1982). It is in a story headlined "se repliega la flota a 150 Kms. de la isla" [the task force retreats to 150 Kms from the island] (Riva Palacio, 1982, p. 1A) that we find an allusion to the "Belgrano." The story's main theme is the Argentine successes in the incipient war. Buried in page 12A, we find the "Belgrano." The cruiser is reported "hit" by a British torpedo suffering damages in the attack (Riva Palacio, 1982). The placement and size of the reference is in stark contrast to those in The New York Times and El Mercurio.

El Universal's front-page main headline is dedicated to the diplomatic efforts to stop the war. The other headline on this page refers to the fact that both sides claim victories ("Ambas partes," 1982). Under this headline, there is a collection of three stories from AP's wire service. The third story datelined in London reports the Belgrano being hit and damaged.

This date is especially important for the analysis since it highlights how headlines determine the significance of a story. All newspapers had the information about the incident. Two decided to print front-page headlines underscoring the event and assigning to it a high degree of significance. Two decided to report the story succinctly and unobtrusively while focusing on other aspects of the war. By the following day, May 4, all four newspapers had the "Belgrano" as the day's most important story. By then it was known that the "Belgrano" had sunk with most of its 1,042 sailors.

May 29: Capture of Darwin and Goose Green

On this date, half of The New York Times front page was dedicated to the Falklands/Malvinas conflict. The main headline declared: "Britain announces capture of 2 Falkland settlements in push toward capital." Immediately under it, a deck headline states: "claim is contested" (Borders, 1982a, p. A1). The New York Times is cautious in the treatment of this story. The headline is not stating a fact. It is merely reporting that Britain "announced" the capture. Moreover, the paper immediately warns the reader that such "announcement" is being contested. The author is also very careful about reporting the action, even when analyzing its consequences for Argentina. "The Argentine forces at Darwin and Goose Green were well dug in, and their defeat, if the British reports are correct, could be psychologically important to both sides" (Borders, 1982a, p. A1). The reader will understand that this is only Great Britain's version ("if the British reports are correct") of the events.

El Mercurio, on the other hand, announces the story as a fact. "Victoria británica en Darwin y Goose Green" [British victory in Darwin and Goose Green] ("Victoria," 1982, p.A1.). The story, datelined in London, is from UPI. In it there is no reference to Argentina's version of the incidents. An infographic placed on page A12 depicts British offensive in the islands. A text box explains: "Gran Bretaña anuncia captura de Puerto Darwin y Goose Green. Argentina lo niega" [Great Britain announces capture of Port Darwin and Goose Green. Argentina denies it] ("Victoria," 1982, p. A12). But placement is crucial, especially to the average newspaper reader who relies on the front page for an understanding of what is happening. Therefore, readers of El Mercurio's front page will understand the capture of Darwin and Goose Green as a "done deal," a fact, since this is the way the newspaper is presenting the events.

The Pope's visit to Great Britain occupies the banner headline on Excelsior's front page. Under this headline and its accompanying story and photograph, two smaller, parallel headlines announce stories from Buenos Aires and London. To the left, the Buenos Aires headline states: "Repelen en Puerto Darwin a las tropas británicas" [British troops repelled in Port Darwin] (Riva Palacio & Uribe Navarrete, 1982, p.1A). To the right, the London headline: "Anuncia GB la captura de dos enclaves en las islas" [Great Britain announces the capture of two island settlements] ("Anuncia GB," 1982, p. 1A). By being placed under the main story and to the left, the headline from Buenos Aires is probably read immediately before the one from London.[6] The reader will "know" about British troops being "repelled" in Port Darwin before reading Britain's announcement of the capture of two (unnamed in the headline) settlements.

Once again, the choice of verbs in the two stories is crucial to their understanding. From Buenos Aires, we learn that the British troops have been repelled by Argentine troops, "confirmó esta noche el Estado Mayor Conjunto de las fuerzas armadas" [confirmed tonight the joints chief of staff of the armed forces] (Riva Palacio & Uribe Navarrete, 1982, p.1A). While we read from London that the British Minister of Defense "informó" [informed] ("Anuncia GB," 1982, p. 1A) that British troops had capture two settlements. "Confirm" implies verification, validation, authentication. It is a stronger verb than the simple "inform" of the London story. With the placement of these stories and their choice of verbs, the Excelsior reader is induced to assign more importance and more truthfulness to Buenos Aires' version of the events than to London's.

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[6] The relationship between placement and significance of a story is discussed by Stuart Hall in pages 19-20 of his "Introduction" to A.C.H. Smith (Ed.), Paper voices: The popular press and social change, 1935-1965 (pp. 11-24). London:Chatto&Windus.

"Argentina resiste avance inglés hacia Darwin y Goose Green" [Argentina resists English advance toward Darwin and Goose Green] is El Universal's front-page main headline. Furthermore, the kicker line states that a British frigate and two British helicopters have been damaged ("Argentina resiste," 1982, p. 1-1). Although the first deck headline asserts that a London communique announces the capture of the two "key positions," this statement is totally overshadowed by the larger headline in bold print. In consequence, the reader is lead to believe that in this war, Argentina is more successful than Britain. El Universal's headline is in stark contrast with El Mercurio's. The Venezuelan newspaper depicts the events as successful "resistance" by Argentina, while the Chilean newspaper defines them as a clear "win" for Great Britain.

June 15: The War Ends

Although The New York Times front page is dedicated mostly to the Lebanon-Israel conflict, a banner headline proclaims: "Britain announces Argentine surrender to end the 10-week war in the Falklands" ("Britain announces," 1982, p. A1). The authority to define the events is assigned to Great Britain, the source of the "announcement." The story under this headline is datelined in London and has a photograph of a smiling Margaret Thatcher. "Argentine forces in the Falkland Islands have surrendered, halting the war in the South Atlantic," "there was no confirmation of the surrender from Buenos Aires (...) but the Argentine high command announced (...) an unofficial cease-fire" (Apple,Jr., 1982^b, p. A1). Although The New York Times is once again cautious with the wording, for the reader the bottom line is that Argentina has surrendered and the war is over.

This is also the gist of El Mercurio's front page. "Se rindieron fuerzas argentinas" [Argentine forces have surrendered] ("Se rindieron," 1982, p. A1). A large picture of Margaret Thatcher smiling and waving reinforces the idea that Argentina has lost. For The New York Times and El Mercurio readers, Argentina's surrender is a fact. The conflict is over.

Not so for Excelsior. The Mexican newspaper's banner headline asserts: "cesan el fuego y se discute la rendición de Argentina" [cease fire and Argentina's surrender is being discussed] ("Cesan," 1982, p. 1A). The inference is that Argentina is merely considering surrender. The conflict is not over.

Like The New York Times, El Universal's main headline states that Argentina's surrender has been "announced by Great Britain" ("Rendición," 1982, p.1-1), which does not mean that it has actually happened, but is stronger than Excelsior's assertion that the surrender is "being discussed." However, a lenghty inside story (page 1-6) contains an enormous headline trumpeting: "Se rindió Argentina" [Argentina surrenders] ("Se rindió," 1982, p. 1-6). This headline is as strong in its assertion as the front-page headline in El Mercurio. The difference lies in its placement as an inside story. Nevertheless, for El Universal, the conflict is over.

The most interesting aspect of El Universal's front page is that the only other Falklands/Malvinas headline on this page announces that the Venezuelan president "ratifica" [ratifies] Venezuela's solidarity with Argentina ("Solidaridad," 1982, p.1-1). The "solidarity" theme is once again played in El Universal, even after the war is over.

The analysis of this date, the last day of war, highlights once again the power of wording and placement in defining events. Just like on the first day of coverage analyzed, the choice of words defines the events in different ways. "Argentina has surrendered," "Argentina's surrender being discussed." The former implies that the war is over, the latter does not.

"FALKLANDS" OR "MALVINAS"

"Falklands" for The New York Times. "Malvinas" first, and then "Falklands" for El Mercurio. "Malvinas" for Excelsior and El Universal. What is in a name? In the case of this particular conflict, the choice of names, reflected the choice of point of view regarding the territorial dispute and the war. The use of "Falklands" or "Malvinas" became a discursive strategy. "Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language" (Hall & Gieben, 1992, p. 291). This fact was well-known to Argentines whose textbooks and maps depict the islands in the same color as the Argentine territory and with the name "Malvinas." Meanwhile, most World Atlases presented the islands as "Falklands."

The choice of names for these islands reflects different positions regarding their ownership. Like the maps, the names become symbolic emblems of the territorial claims of both sides. When countries other than the ones directly involved in the dispute select a name for these islands, they are in fact, selecting a political stance, and more importantly, they are producing a certain brand of knowledge. Thus, the Falklands/Malvinas War was waged not only in the South Atlantic but also in the arena of language. A parallel war was fought over the name of these islands. The "Falklands" or "Malvinas" War represents the substance of the dispute: the war over sovereignty rights. An although the military war is over, the "Falklands" or "Malvinas" War is not.

"Bestowing a name confers and confirms legitimacy" (Caistor, 199, p. 54). These definitions, these constructions are then pervasively ingrained in culture. After fourteen years, Americans still call the islands "Falklands." So do Chileans, while Mexicans and Venezuelans still call them "Malvinas." Their "knowledge," their cultural and political stances have not changed.

FALKLANDS/MALVINAS WAR COVERAGE AND FOREIGN POLICY

The New York Times took a frank pro-Great Britain position before the Reagan government decided to side with the British. Actually, the Times editorial position bluntly requested the government to do away with any neutral positions, and to acknowledge that the U.S.-Great Britain relationship could not be compared or put in a balance with the U.S.-Argentina relationship. Although the American government never pronounced itself on the matter of sovereignty of the islands, the Times with its use of the name "Falklands" expressed what its position was in regards to the islands' ownership.

Chile declared its neutrality over the conflict. This neutrality, however, was considered by other Latin American countries as a "cold shoulder" attitude toward Argentina. Neutrality in reference to that close a neighbor was interpreted by the Latin American community as a position against Argentina. Meanwhile the Chilean media presented a pro-Great Britain stance on the conflict, which reflected the country's looming territorial dispute with Argentina over the Beagle Channel.

El Mercurio's coverage of the Falklands/Malvinas War was so extensive, it could be defined as obsessive. From the day of the Argentine invasion until the day before the Argentine surrender, it was the only issue, (international or even national), covered in the front-page headlines. There were few exceptions, mainly when the soccer World Cup was played in Spain, some games would get front-page headlines.

There are three possible explanations to this obsessive coverage. The first one may be that it reflects Chile's long-standing love-hate relationship with its neighbor Argentina. The second explanation may be that it reflected the government's fears that Argentina might also challenge Chile for disputed territory. Still a third explanation may be that in a time when Chile was governed by Pinochet, when human-rights abuses were rampant, when El Mercurio had a close relationship with the government, the Falklands/ Malvinas story was the perfect distraction from Chile's tough reality.

At the onset of the conflict, Excelsior reflected the Mexican government's ambivalent position toward the conflict. The "Malvinas" belong to Argentina, but the invasion is not an acceptable procedure to recover them. Interestingly enough, the more the conflict escalated, the more Excelsior's coverage became pro-Argentine. Especially after the United States sided with the British, both Excelsior and the Mexican government stopped mentioning the inadequacy of Argentina's method of recovering the islands. The conflation of Great Britain and the United States as a menacing, imperialist bloc is one of Excelsior's main features. It reflects Mexico's uneasiness toward its northern neighbor, the U.S.

El Universal and the Venezuelan government were never ambivalent toward the conflict. Their solidarity with Argentina was explicit and very consistent from the beginning of the crisis. The conflict was constructed as an "us v. them" dispute, in which a consensus was built around the idea that Argentina was right on every action. Moreover, Venezuelans, like Argentineans, were lead to believe in Argentina's triumph up until the very end of the conflict. In a country that prides itself on being one of Latin America's most stable democracies. A country whose freedom of expression and media independence are widely recognized, it is ironic that no alternative views were printed. Space and print were allotted to any person or entity who wanted to voice yet another solidarity-with-Argentina statement. Different opinions simply cannot be found. Furthermore, the headlines' wording was such that El Universal's version of the war was radically different from that of The New York Times, but no different at all from the government's official position.

Finally, in all four countries, the newspapers analyzed presented a version of the events that was compatible with the country's diplomatic position. It was the same for authoritarian

Chile, one-party Mexico, and even for two of the most liberal societies, the United States and Venezuela. In all of them, the press took a stance that mirrored the government's position.

Through textual analysis, the cultural works performed by the texts are perceived and the connection between the actual war and its four versions are described. However, the analysts' identities must be acknowledged, since they become part of the interpretive process. "The starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 324). The interaction between two authors—a Venezuelan who "lived" the Falklands/Malvinas War in the United States, and an American scholar interested in the representation of Others from the position of American cultural hegemony—certainly conditions the choice of topic and our interpretations.

The study of texts (i.e. the news stories) as an everyday indicator of the systems of meanings present in each of the countries analyzed, presents us with the different versions of this particular war. A set of events are constructed in four different ways yielding four different "knowledges," four different "realities" that are not divorced from each country's context.

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